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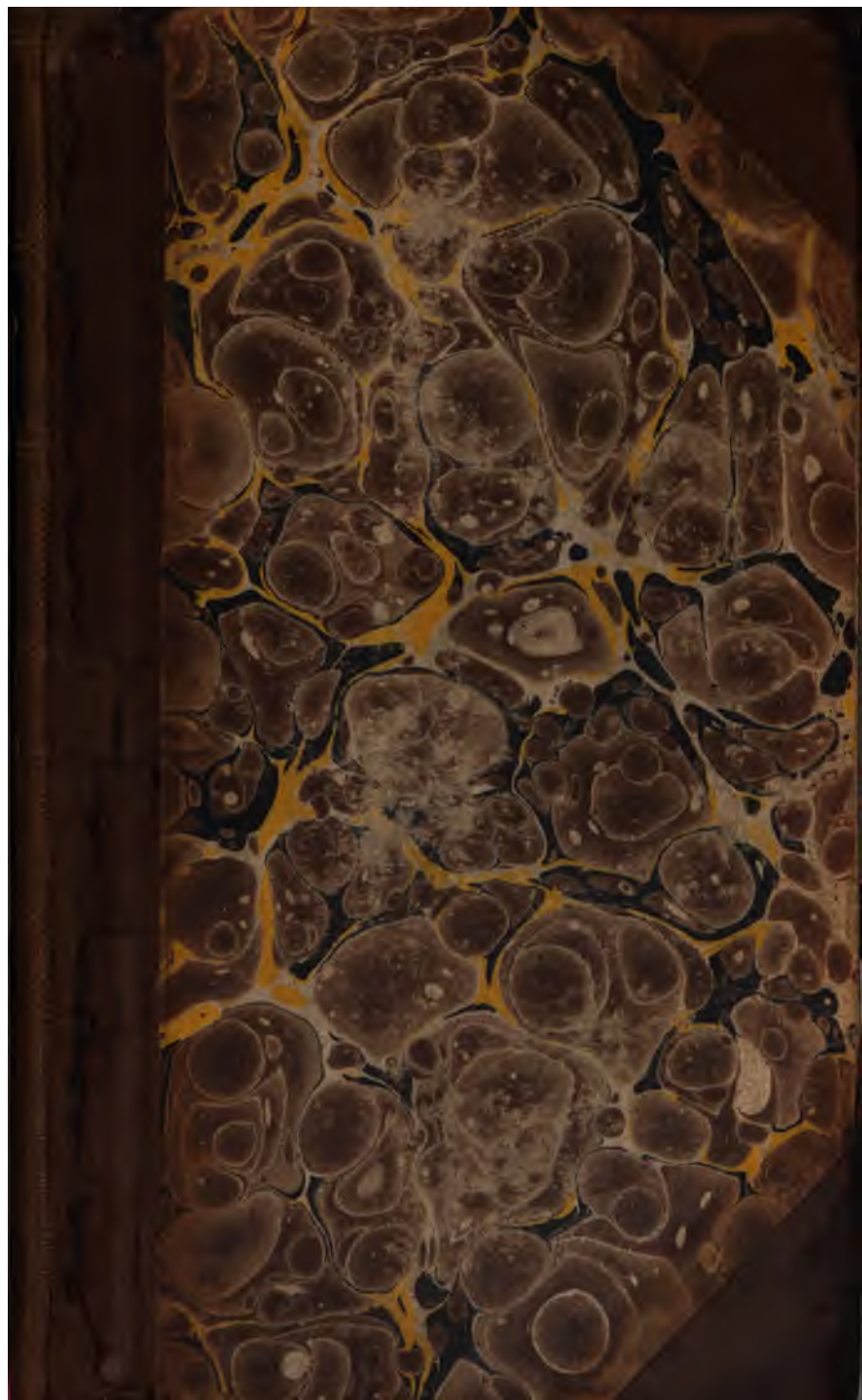
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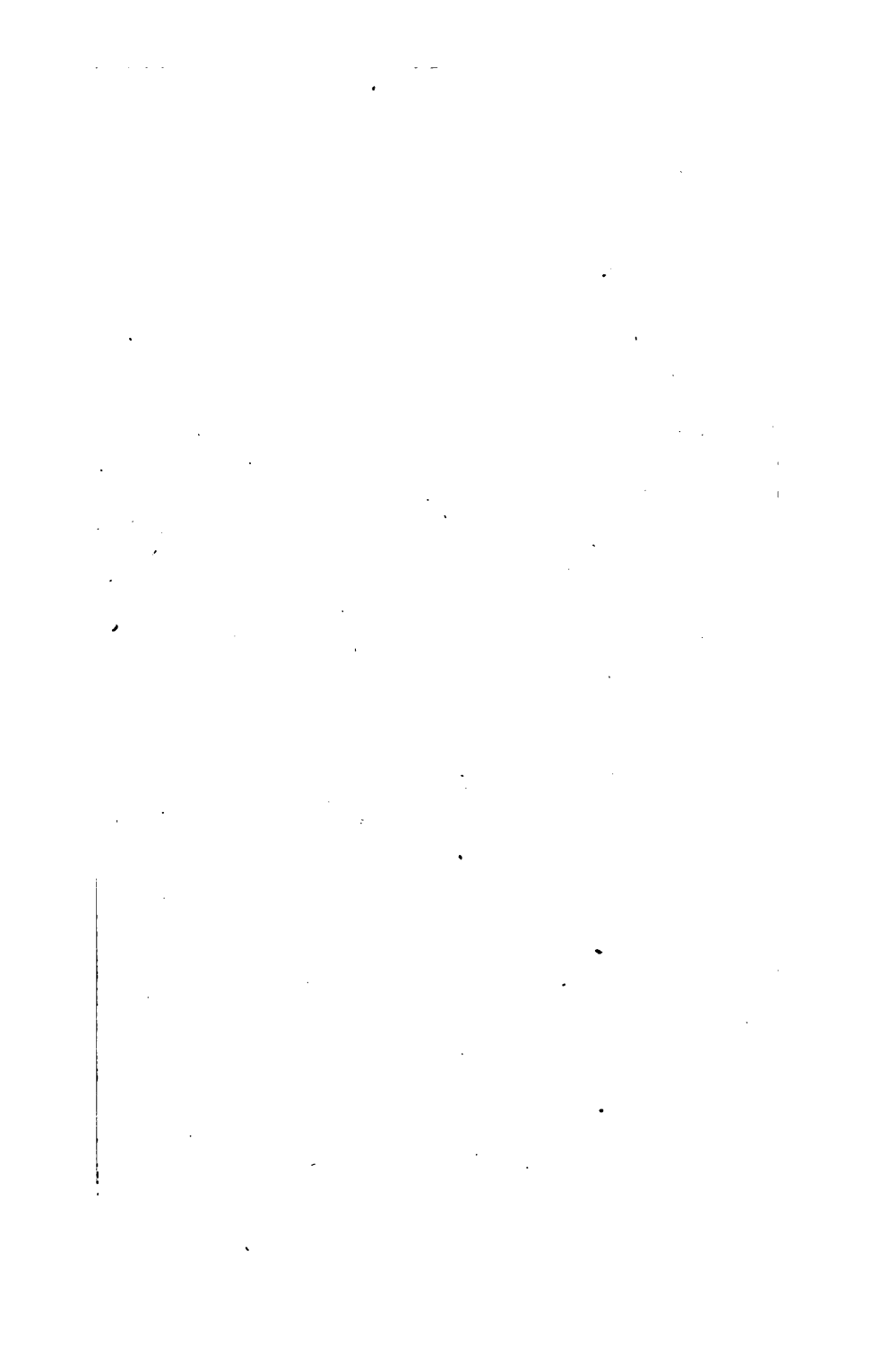


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THE

PROTESTANT VINDICATOR;

OR,

A REFUTATION OF THE CALUMNIES

CONTAINED IN

Cobbett's History of the Reformation;

INCLUDING REMARKS

ON THE PRINCIPAL TOPICS

OF THE

POPISH CONTROVERSY,

BY ROBERT OXLAD.

"When I recall to mind at last, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the Church; how the bright and blissful Reformation, by divine power, struck through the black and settled night of ignorance and antichristian tyranny,---methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears; and the sweet odour of the returning Gospel imbathe his soul with the fragrancy of Heaven."

MILTON.

WIGHTMAN AND CRAMP,
LONDON.

1826.

229.

TO THE
VENERABLE AND REVEREND
FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M. A. F. R. S.
ARCHDEACON OF CLEVELAND,
AND
PREBEND OF YORK AND CHESTER;
WITH
THE GREATEST DEFERENCE TO HIS LEARNING,
ADMIRATION OF HIS LIBERALITY,
AND
GRATITUDE FOR HIS KINDNESS,
THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED
BY THE
AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

Had the Author, when he commenced the following work, fully contemplated its appearance before the public in its present complete form, he would probably have shrunk from the responsibility incurred; and have declined the undertaking, from a fear of his incompetency to engage public attention. Local excitements prompted the effort, and little was at first proposed but the gratification of a few friends; and if the undertaking, commenced with some portion of acknowledged inconsideration, should be found unworthy the approval of the impartial and distant reader, it will not occasion the disappointment of ambition in authorship, so much as prevent that feeling for the future, which has never been excessively indulged hitherto. There is, however, one consideration, which he proposes as a mitigation of the severity of the just, and as a humble claim on the regard of the candid and condescending—the facts of the English Reformation have seldom been condensed, so as to put persons of restricted reading and little leisure in possession of answers to the popular calumnies of Roman Catholics. Burnet's History will always be valued for the variety and minuteness of its detail; and destroys the necessity of any elaborate and extended publication of the same nature. But Burnet will never be read by the majority of Protestants of the present day; independent of which, the statement of old facts by a new writer, may invest them again with that influence over the public mind which the lapse of time had destroyed, and the renewal of which is necessary to perpetuate the interests, and spread the triumphs of truth. Beside, the prejudices of men are always shifting, and objections which the original historian of a great event scarcely thought worthy his notice, become of great magnitude in the estimation of others, and require to be specifically met on account of their influence.

The attempts which have recently been made in various parts of the country for the revival of Popery, have roused the attention of many Protestant writers; and it is matter of congratulation, that in the excitement of Controversy, the History of Popery, and of Protestant Reformations, has been discussed with learning and care. The various publications of Dr. Southey, the Rev. J. B. White, and Mr. Butler, will no doubt possess an important influence, in fixing the attention of the present generation on facts, which once recorded, are too frequently forgotten.

A "History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland," by the author of the "Political Register," excited surprise among all parties. And though its effect in favour of the Roman Catholics in this country has been very weak, and many have considered that whatever is published by this writer, at the present period of his career, is unworthy a reply, because doubted by every one, it appeared to the writer of the following pages to afford a fair opportunity for reviewing our own religious history, and for providing, in a compendious form, an historical refutation of those calumnies, which are repeated in various publications, and echoed by almost every Papist in the kingdom. Historical misrepresentations ought not to be left to circulate without correction, for though the sophistry of an argument may sometimes be left to common sagacity to detect, the perversion of a fact can only be exposed by a fact for the satisfaction of the many. The progress of the English Reformation is instructive, its events are illustrative of the principles at issue; and a careful enquiry will show, that whatever were the imperfections and crimes by which it was occasionally impeded and injured, it gives us many rules for our conduct—exhibits many patterns for our imitation—and is the source of the most valued privileges we enjoy. Any attempt, therefore, to familiarize the history of this event should be encouraged, honoured its success, and deplored in its failure.

The author is aware that he is open to critical objections, on account of an apparent confusion in his arrangement, and many errors of composition. But while he prepares himself to bow to any correction he has merited, he ventures to remind his reader, that the publication of a work in numbers, at different periods, and in answer to another at the same time in course of publication, did not allow of a clear and prospective arrangement, which might have prevented many irregularities and repetitions. For errors in composition, he can offer as his only apology, what perhaps may itself require an apology, as inconsistent with the respect due to the public, that much of it was written in haste, and amidst numerous interruptions. Conscious of its imperfections, he does not presume to offer it at the temple of Literature; but casts it, mistrustingly, into the current, which, though occasionally beneficial in its course, soon consigns its burden to oblivion.

THE
PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. I.

SATURDAY, JUNE 18.

OBJECTIONS exploded in one age, are generally revived in the next. Distortions of facts, and puerile arguments, which the triumphant disputant considered as consigned to oblivion; and for defending which, his opponents were exposed to public disgrace, are often, after the lapse of a few years, repeated with unblushing effrontery, as if they had never been previously answered, nor even announced. This is the case with Cobbett's History of the Reformation in England and Ireland. The facts and arguments employed by this writer, have long since been discussed and disposed of, and while the blackened page of the calumniator has been forgotten, the Reformation has taken its place in all standard and authentic History, as the most splendid era of liberty and truth. It is, however, unfortunately our fate, to behold in Cobbett the revival of defeated hostility, with no small portion of original effrontery. Scarcely a misrepresentation can be found in the pages of the most blundering and dishonest scribe of former days; scarcely a calumny was ever invented by hatred the most profound; nor any disgusting artifice resorted to by the basest drudge of the Romish Church, for the purpose of distorting truth, libelling excellence, and deceiving the multitude,

which this modern Champion does not seize with an avidity the most amusing, and dwell on with an irritation the most splenetic. It is difficult to imagine that a man of Cobbett's age and reading can believe the things on which he so strongly insists, and equally difficult to suppose that he can expect to be believed by others. He must either himself have been so much engaged in examining the Politics of the day, and in the manufacture of Straw Hats, together with the culture of *Ruta Baga*, as with perfect ignorance of Popery and Protestantism, to become the dupe of the former; or he is drawing largely on the ignorance of his readers, and treating them as void of discrimination. Our readers may choose which supposition they please, we have no doubt of being able to assist them to the conclusions, that he is either to be derided for his ignorance, or condemned for an insult on their understanding.

If the History of the Reformation before us, had been distinguished by nothing but a perversion of facts, we should calmly examine it without any allusion to the author; but, when the most unqualified abuse is heaped on whole bodies of Christians, and on all who venture to protest against the Church of Rome,—when solely on account of our Protestantism, we are to be proclaimed as ignorant, our motives are to be defamed, and all our activity denounced as mischievous, we are obliged to tell our opponent what we think of his character,—to express the honest feelings his treatment naturally awakens, and to analyze his proud claims to infallibility. Cobbett evidently trusts to the confidence of his spirit and the boldness of his assertions for success; if, therefore, we can show that he outrages in these respects all that is decorous and decent, our efforts will not be useless in warning the reader against an influence of which he ought always to be jealous. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" It may perhaps be considered an unprecedented violation of propriety, to commence a controversial discussion with such personalities; but

It should be recollected, that Cobbett is a writer, whose arrogance is so unequalled, and whose vituperation is so excessive, that no man ought to enter the field of reason with him, without first telling him, that he has destroyed the foundation of personal respect, and that instead of being met on equal terms as an opposite Counsel in a Court of Justice, he must be content to be arraigned as a culprit at the bar of the public. We deeply regret that any necessity of this kind exists: we should feel exceedingly happy if we had to meet an opponent who respected the civilities and decencies of society, and who, on this account, challenged our respect, while we might dispute his opinions. But though in using an indignant and reproving style, the PROTESTANT VINDICATOR adopts a measure strange to his inclination and habits, he considers it due to the interests of benevolence and candour, that such writers as Butler* and Cobbett should be as much distinguished by our mode of treating them, as they are by the spirit of their respective performances.

Cobbett has been hitherto principally known as a Political writer, what epithet is to be employed on the present occasion, it is difficult to determine. *Religious* it cannot be, and probably our readers will be divided between *political* and *mercenary*, as indicative of his novel attempt. To many it must appear surprising, that this "Apostle of Freedom,"—this "Advocate of Reform,"—this enemy of "*Priestcraft*," should now pledge all his influence with the nation to the cause of Popery. Imagine one of his admirers, who for years has been joining in his declamations on tyranny and corruption, to hear for the first time, that this Idol of a certain circle, has become the Champion of Popery—of Popery not as it may be supposed to exist in the present day, in a subdued or improved state, but as it appeared in the days of Monkish barbarism, and amidst the fires of the execrated Mary. The simple-hearted admirer of Cobbett as a Political Reformer, would immediately suppose

* Charles Butler, Esq.

that he had become an apostate, and on opening the pages of his Reformation, expect to find his consistency in his new undertaking, preserved by an avowed defence of the principles of despotism; but how would such a man be surprised to find, that it is as the boisterous friend of Liberty that he laments our deliverance from Priestly oppression, and hates the freedom in Religion which our Protestant forefathers purchased for themselves, and for us. Christians and Men! Is not this imposture too gross? Did you lose your liberty by being allowed to think for yourselves,—by having the cells of your prison thrown open,—by destroying the rack, and removing the stake? What! were Gardiner and Bonner the heroes of British freedom? And is it true, that we are more enslaved at the present day than we were under our Catholic Princes? To form an historical alliance between Civil Liberty and the Popery of former ages, is the acme of Popish fanaticism, and will never be attempted by the real friend of liberty. To those who are acquainted with the Political career of Cobbett, his present attempt will excite no more than a temporary surprise, for in looking away from his empty professions to the feelings he has uniformly inculcated, we feel ourselves warranted in saying, that amidst domestic occurrences and great foreign revolutions, he has proved himself hostile to the interests of his Countrymen, and to the liberties of Europe and the world. He has poured contempt on the efforts of the philanthropic Wilberforce to destroy the Slave Trade and Emancipate the Negroes,—the efforts of enlightened and patriotic Senators to improve the Discipline of our Prisons, and revise our Criminal Code have been derided by him,—Benevolent Institutions for the aid of depressed Manufacturers, have had to contend with his violent opposition,—Unitarians, when complaining of their grievances, have found him an enemy,—when the heroic remnant of Spain was rising against the tyranny of their Catholic Prince, and French Invasion, he did his best to chill the sympathy of his Countrymen, and prevent the offer of

aid,—and for him, the persevering Greeks may sink in iron bondage, without a hand stretched out for their help, or a sigh for their wretchedness. In what has been emphatically called “an ago of cant,” Cobbett’s cant of liberty is the most disgusting,—the only liberty for which he cares, is the licentiousness of his own press.

It is obvious to every reader, that there is some difficulty in meeting many of Cobbett’s statements, because the suspicion will arise that he is insincere; and that with all his hatred to *real* Religion, which he persecutes under the name of Protestantism, he has an equal contempt for Popery at heart. There is great *dissimulatio* in the manner in which he conducts the subject: he is often bold and daring, but when approaching the point which is to try his honesty, he is far from being frank and decided. That he is not a Protestant in our sense of a man concerned for the interests of pure Religion, is plain, and therefore, he must be either a Roman Catholic, with the meekest subjection of his mind to the tyranny of Priests, or a masked Infidel, honoring Catholicism by making it the instrument of injury to Christianity as a Divine Revelation. Protestants! will you suffer yourselves to be deceived by a man who has sunk into the abyss of Popery? Roman Catholics! will you boast of the advocate, who regards you merely as subservient to the triumphs of Infidelity?—In no instance does Cobbett profess himself a Catholic: he abounds in commendations of the Catholic Church—he palliates its crimes; but we believe he is never found in devout attendance at Mass, or in humble prostration before a Crucifix,—he does no Penance,—he employs no Confessor; and though he would have consecrated the bones of Paine, and canonized this enemy of Rome, he has never manifested any profound respect for the worshipped Relics of former days; and never will he step forth, and manfully proclaim to the world his implicit faith in Pope or Council. Yet we have a right to demand this. He ought most explicitly to inform us what his sentiments are in

a Controversy, of the conduct and principles of one party in which he professes so much abhorrence. But in vain do we turn from page to page for any thing of this description; and in vain we put to him the most pointed interrogatories; all the answer we get, is made up of invective and defamation. His aims, however, to cajole the multitude; — he seeks to inflame the public mind against the Protestant Religion, without giving us the creed he would substitute; and while he endeavours to fright the unsuspecting away on one side by false alarms, laboriously conceals the tremendous evils into which he would precipitate them on the other. Will he set up a defence of the Pope's Infallibility, and of Transubstantiation? Will he plead for a hierarchy of Priests, whose measures must never be disputed, and an army of Friars, insinuating themselves into every family? Will he become the Apologist for the Jesuits, amidst those enormities which occasioned the suppression of their order? Will he welcome to England the Inquisition, with its apparatus of torture and death? Will this man, so jealous of the Independence of the people of the British Crown, and on this account so violent a foe to the Protestant Establishment, rejoice in the revival of this overbearing engine of civil despotism? Will he join in the barbarous cry of Heresy, and breaking his plighted faith with Heretics, lead them in triumph to the stake? If he be not a Roman Catholic, he ought to be abandoned by all parties; and if he be, he is one of the worst of his party; and his pretended concern for Liberty is a farce and a cheat. But perhaps, we may be told, it is unfair in the present state of Popery, to require his professed admiration of it as it formerly existed; to which we reply, that if he were contending for Emancipation on the ground of its application to present circumstances, this might be admitted in part; but he has voluntarily gone back to the worst times of Popery, and where many a Roman Catholic has sickened at the scent, and bowed to the truth of our representations, he sees nothing but

"ease, and happiness, and harmony, and Christian charity." With Roman Catholics, we have little to do, our appeal is chiefly to enquiring Protestants, yet we cannot forbear on this occasion, some serious expostulation with the former. We are sorry to see them in such company: we wish them to partake of the diffusive liberality of the present age, and attain to that respectability of character which will always refuse an alliance with the objects of common aversion. They have mistaken the extent of Cobbett's influence, and as if they had no ideas of mental independence, have calculated on our submission to an authority, which its possessor has forfeited by its abuse, and long since ceased to enjoy. They have fallen into a fatal error, in supposing, for a moment, that this consumption of sanity and impudence will not meet with the scornful abhorrence it deserves. Besides, by soliciting the aid of such a writer as Cobbett, or by accepting of it, if he grants the royal offer, they have manifested a criminal contempt for public opinion: they have also roused the suspicion that a contempt for truth still enters into their system of defence, and that in matters little what lies are uttered if men can be misled. They have, we believe, reckoned on the power of the strange ally, as sufficient to turn popular prejudice from its present course to the side of Emancipation, but no expectation, we maintain, can be more absurd. We do not wish to mingle the question of Catholic Claims with the History of the Reformation, but we may be allowed to say, that as friendly to universal Emancipation, we deeply regret this worse than Jesuitical performance. Popular prejudice against Catholic Claims is owing to the recollection of what Popery was when it stood opposed to the Reformation, and the plausible arguments derived from this review, can only be answered by proving that the present enlightened state of the Nation affords a barrier to persecuting power, and a corrective to intolerant principles. To maintain, therefore, that the Reformation was a change for the worse, is the certain way to confirm the same.

hostile and unmanageable prepossessions. So much injury is Cobbett likely to effect to the cause of Emancipation, that if it were not impossible for them to descend to such artifice, it would be more reasonable to suppose that Lord Eldon and Mr. Peel had bribed him to this labor, than that the Catholics themselves were his admirers and patrons. If the Catholics of England and Ireland are anxious to recommend themselves to Protestants, it must be by discountenancing such a writer as this; he might have succeeded in the days of Mary, but now he will stand as an obstacle in their way, till they unthinkingly abandon him to the contempt he must always obtain from others.

Before we proceed to examine particularly the History before us, we will present our readers with a passage which states the design of the work, and to which the writer repeatedly refers as the ground or text of his subject. Speaking of the alteration procured in Religion by Protestants, he says, "Now, my friends, a fair and honest inquiry will teach us, that this was an alteration greatly for *the worse*,—that the "Reformation," as it is called, was engendered in beastly lust, brought forth in hypocrisy and perfidy, and cherished and fed by plunder, devastation, and by rivers of innocent English and Irish blood; and that as to its more remote consequences they are, some of them, now before us, in that misery, that beggary, that nakedness, that plunder, that everlasting wrangling and spite, which now stare us in the face, and stun our ears at every turn, and which the "Reformation" has given us in exchange for the ease, and happiness, and harmony, and Christian charity, enjoyed so abundantly, and for so many ages, by our Catholic forefathers." (Let. 1. § 4.) We have given this passage at length; and though we hope to afford Cobbett no occasion for complaining of misrepresentation, we take this opportunity of saying, that we cannot promise to indulge in large and frequent quotations, because the language of this Teacher of English, and Champion of

primitive Religion, is so ribald and indecent, that it not only offends against taste, but in many instances, insults the modesty of virtue.

Amidst declamation on the great advantage of a Roman Catholic Establishment to the Nation and the world, we have an attempt to account for the anxiety of Protestants in opposing it. This is done by referring to the transfer of property from one to the other: "Ah! my friends, (the writer eagerly exclaims) here we have the *real motive* for all the abuse, all the hideous calumnies that have been heaped upon the Catholic Religion, and upon all that numerous body of our fellow subjects, who adhere to that ancient faith. When you think of the power of this motive, you will not be surprized at the great and incessant pains that have been taken to deceive us." (Let. 1. § 9);—Now this, we maintain, will not suffice to account for it. The supposition that this is the real motive, can exist only in a very circumscribed view of the History of the case. The Reformation at home and abroad was first undertaken and chiefly promoted by men who had nothing to gain, and every thing to lose. Emolument was on the side of the Catholics: their revenues immense, and their command of the property of the nation, through all the gradations of rank, more efficient and absolute than even any Monarch ever possessed. Yea, the Constitution of the Romish Church, and the necessary operation of its institutions on ignorant and superstitious minds, rendered it affluent beyond comparison. Now let it be observed, the origin of Protestantism was not the *plunder* of this property, but the *sacrifice* of it, and was often the removal of men from wealth and ease, to poverty, imprisonment, and death. Beside, whatever instances may now exist of this principle of opposition to Popery among the endowed Clergy of Great Britain, did Mr. Cobbett forget that this opposition was diffused among thousands of another description. We indignantly repel the charge as applicable to the whole body of our Established Clergy, and beg leave to

remind this writer, that the Dissenters of England and Ireland are equally opposed to Popery, without the most distant possibility of being influenced by mercenary motives: while, whether among the Clergy or Dissenting Ministry, the avarice of a few individuals will never atone for that public feeling, which from one end of the kingdom to the other, has long been, and will always remain eminently *Protestant*. And after all, it should be recollected that this is a charge which most recoils on the adversary, for strengthened by the well-known avarice of Popes and Cardinals, and thousands of inferior Ministers, it would be easy to suggest, that the anxiety which the Roman Catholics of the present day manifest for success, is not so much owing to a concern for truth, as to a love of that wealth they have lost. But we do not dwell on the suggestion, we wish it to be understood, that the question between us, is not a dispute of worldly interest: the vitality of Religion, the essential principles of faith and Christian obedience are concerned; and what, amidst all possible corruption of motive, are chiefly involved in the discussion, is the purity of the Gospel as a theory, and the salvation of the soul in effect. To reduce this subject to the endowed ascendancy of one or two parties, is to render it unworthy a debate; and however it may agree with Cobbett's modes of thinking on Religion, betrays affecting ignorance of the momentous interests at stake.

The antiquity and universality of the Romish Church, are mentioned as if they had never been disputed. "Now let us (says this haughty Catechist) let us put a plain question or two to ourselves and to these our teachers, and we shall quickly be able to form a just estimate of the *modesty, sincerity, and consistency* of these revilers of the Catholic Religion. They will not, because they cannot deny, that this Religion was the *ONLY CHRISTIAN* Religion in the world for *fifteen hundred years* after the death of Christ." (Let. 1. § 10.)—Can it be possible that Cobbett expected we should acquiesce in the negative he

has so kindly imposed upon us. "They will not, because they cannot, deny that this Religion was the only CHRISTIAN Religion in the world for *fifteen hundred years* after the death of Christ!" Yes, we will deny it, most peremptorily, and that because there is no falsehood we can expose more triumphantly. The Head of the Catholic Religion is the Pope, and it will not, because it cannot be maintained, that this Religion had a being without its Head. But the Christian Religion knew nothing of the Pope of Rome for centuries after the death of Christ.—Hear Cobbett himself: he follows the quotation we have just made, by immediately adding, "They may say indeed, that for the *first three hundred years* there was no Pope seated at Rome, but then for *twelve hundred years* there had been," &c. Thus Cobbett himself proves that the Christian Religion existed several centuries before the Roman Catholic, and consequently that the Roman Catholic Religion must be something essentially distinct from pure and original Christianity. The statement which this man so boldly makes in one sentence, and which, let it be particularly observed, is essential to his cause, is flatly contradicted by himself in the next. So much for "*modesty, sincerity, and consistency*," at the outset!

"This is pretty complete," as he afterwards says, but this is not all: the establishment of the Papedom, placed by this Historian in the *fourth* century, did not take place till the *seventh*; thus removing the ancient Roman Catholic Religion to a distance, truly, somewhat remote from the foundation of Christianity. Though disposed to give this writer credit for extensive information on some subjects, and often tempted to regard his mistakes as more those of design than of ignorance, we imagine that he has little acquaintance with Ecclesiastical History, and that his exposure to the charge of misrepresentation is often involuntary, the natural result of meddling with what he has not studied, and cannot understand. He evidently confounds, in the present extract, the secular patronage

of Constantine, in the fourth century, with the recognition by Phocas of the paramount claims of the Bishop of Rome, in the seventh. A fierce and disgraceful conflict had long been maintained by the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople, for the title of *Œcumenical* or *Universal Bishop*. The Emperor Mauritius conferred this envied distinction on Constantinople, as the seat of Imperial power, A.D. 588. Phocas, the succeeding Emperor, was pressed by Gregory with arguments for the supremacy of Rome, and in the time of Boniface the Third, the *sixty-fifth* Bishop of Rome, entailed the title, by a new decree, on the Roman Pontiff for ever. This was about A.D. 604. Such is the date, and such the outline of the origin of the Roman Catholic Religion, about *six hundred years after the death of Christ!* But the History of this case is full of instruction, for, whatever Cobbett may say of the origin of the English Reformation, the transactions of Gregory and Boniface with Phocas, unfold the most humiliating scenes of villainy and intrigue. Phocas,—the author of the Catholicism of Rome,—was one of the most relentless murderers that ever waded through blood to a throne. The character of Henry the Eighth of England, may fill with contempt, but that of the Roman Emperor, at every view of it, chills the heart with horror. Yet no sooner had he fixed himself on the throne, than Gregory bursts into the most rapturous exclamation of “Glory to God in the highest,”—flatters him as if he had been a pattern of virtue,—speaks of his slaughtered predecessor as if he had been stained with the blackest crimes, and who, but a short time before, had been the idol of his veneration. We ask with surprize and disgust, what could be the motive of a Christian Bishop for this slavish subjection to a man, with whom, it has been justly said, an honest heathen would for some time at least, have avoided any intercourse or correspondence? The fact is, Gregory knew that his rival at Constantinople was not in high favor with Phocas, on account of his attachment to the family of the

former Emperor, and therefore hoped, by the vilest sycophancy, to procure the revocation of the title of Universal Bishop. Gregory soon died, but Boniface the Third, as we have seen, enjoyed the fruit of this impious traffic of ambition with power. From this time it is, that the Church of Rome has been called Catholic, and its head Pope, Father, or Universal Bishop. But what must still further involve the patrons of Roman Catholicism in confusion, is, that their Sainted Gregory,—Gregory the Great!—when opposing the claims of Constantinople, denounced the title in question, as *heretical and blasphemous*; and declared, that whoever assumed it was the follower of Lucifer,—the forerunner and herald of Antichrist! Thus the very Bishop who laid with his own hands the foundation of Roman Catholicism, has himself inscribed on its front the name of ANTICHRIST!

The Pope's assumption of supreme dictation has never been quietly and universally recognized: and how indeed can that be universal which originated in schism, and whose constitution is essentially schismatic? The phrase Roman Catholic, as Milton shrewdly observed, is one of the Pope's Bulls, being a contradiction in terms, and meaning either a particular-universal, or a universal particular. The Greek, or Oriental Churches have always existed in opposition to Rome; to which we may add, the Syrian and Armenian Christians.—Multitudes from Gregory to Luther protested against her prevalent corruptions and superstitions: while her Martyrs, in various ages and countries, were so many Christian testimonies against her usurpation. Who has not heard and admired the History of the Poor Men of Lyons, or the Albigenses, Waldenses, Bohemian Brethren, and Lollards? So utterly void of foundation is the statement of Cobbett, when he says, that till the time of the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, "no *other* Christian Church was known in the world, nor had any other ever been thought of." Beside, has not the supremacy of the Pope been a fruitful source of

Record in nations and times called Catholic? Have not England, Scotland, France, and Spain, contested their independence? Has not Italy itself, been distinguished by the checks which its Prelates have put on the arrogance of the Roman Pontiff? The truth is, this immutable Catholicism has always been feeble and uncertain,—“a thing of shreds and patches,”—and though bearing on some particular points with portentous power, in relation to its characteristic pretensions, vain and impotent. Mortified arrogance—threats unfulfilled,—and claims withdrawn, are frequent in its history; while the opposition of the best of men has been parallel with its existence.

From these remarks we infer the gross injustice of raising the cry of heresy, and charging upon us the sin of schism. What right has a Church which first made the greatest schism that ever existed in the Christian world, to forbid, under the sanction of the heaviest penalties, any departure from herself? What semblance of reason can she find in fixing on the Protestant Reformation the imputation of change and novelty, when it did nothing more than embody the feeling of opposition to her demand which had always existed, giving in different parts of Europe a predominance to the simplicity which had always been at war with her inventions. On this subject, however, we cannot do better than conclude with an extract from an English Bishop, who lived at the eventful crisis, which Cobbett has been at so much labour to misrepresent.

“And whereas they (the Roman Catholics) pretend we
 “have departed from the unity of the Catholic Church, this
 “is not only odious, but though it is not true, yet it hath an
 “appearance and similitude of truth in it. But then, not
 “only those things which are true and certain, find belief
 “with the ignorant multitude, but those things also which
 “may seem probable; and so we shall ever observe, that
 “crafty cunning men, who had not the truth on their sides,

" have ever maintained their cause with the resemblance of
 " truth ; that those who could not dive into the bottom of
 " things, might be taken at least with the show and pre-
 " bability of their arguments. So they traduce us, and say,
 " that as heretics we have departed from the unity of the
 " Catholic Church, and the communion of Christ ; not that
 " they believe this to be true, nor are they at all concerned
 " whether it be true or false, but because the thing may in
 " some sort seem true to ignorant men ; for we have indeed
 " departed, not as heretics ever have done from the Church
 " of Christ ; but as good men ought to do, from the contagion
 " of wicked men and hypocrites : and yet here they insult
 " wonderfully, that theirs is the Church the Spouse of Christ,
 " the Pillar of Truth, the Ark of Noah, out of which no
 " Salvation is to be hoped for ; and in the interim, they assert
 " with the same confidence, that we have revolted, that we
 " have rent the coat of Christ, and torn ourselves from his
 " body, and made a defection from the Catholic faith. And
 " when they have thus left nothing unsaid which can possibly
 " be (though never so falsely and slanderously) objected
 " against us, yet at last they cannot pretend that we have
 " forsaken the Word of God, or the Apostles of Christ, or the
 " primitive Church. Thus do they impose upon silly men
 " by vain and useless shows, and seek to overwhelm us with
 " the mere name of the Church ; just as if a thief having got
 " possession of another man's house, and having by force
 " expelled or slain the true owner, should afterwards claim it
 " as his own, and keep the true heir out ; or as if Antichrist,
 " after he had seized the Temple of God, should afterwards
 " pretend it were his own, and that Christ had no right to it.
 " For though our adversaries have left almost nothing like a
 " Church in the Church of God, yet they will needs seem the
 " only patrons and defenders of the Church ; just as Gracchus
 " defended the Roman ~~Exchequer~~, by making such profuse
 " largesses, and such unreasonable expenses, that he quite

"ruined the public treasury. But then, there was never any
 "thing yet so absurd or wicked, but it might seem easy to be
 "covered and defended by the name of the Church; for
 "wasps make combs, and impious men have their assemblies
 "not much unlike the Churches. And so as they say, Antæus
 "was to be lifted by Hercules from the Earth his mother,
 "before he could be conquered by him; so our adversaries
 "are to be lifted up from that mother of theirs, the vain
 "pretence and shadow of the Church; or else they will never
 "yield to the Word of God."—*Fathers of the English Church,*
Vol. 7. Jewell's Apology, c. 4.

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NO. II.

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WE attempted to prove in a former paper, that the pretensions of the Pope to ancient and undivided supremacy, were utterly unfounded, and that the unity or Catholicism of the Romish Church, is the wildest fiction which an enthusiast ever framed. Cobbett was also shown to have mistaken most egregiously the History of the case, and not content with giving the lie to others, ventured, in his uncontrollable love of contradiction, to contradict himself. A circumstance, by the way, little remarkable in his writings; for if on any subject of interest, his productions of different periods were to be compared, a mass of inconsistency would be elicited from himself, which perhaps no two partizans in existence—no antipodes in the world of controversy—could equal by their opposition to each other.

Cobbett's account of the Religion of England and Ireland as originally Popish, will be more particularly examined in a future number; at present looking over his introductory work, we shall expose his temerity and rashness, in presuming on the antiquity of the Romish Church, or Papal Legislation, as necessary and uncontradicted. "The Catholic Church," (he says) originated with Jesus Christ himself, he selected

Peter to be the head of his Church. This Apostle's name was Simon, but his Master called him *PETRUS*, which means a stone, or rock; and he said, 'on this rock I will build my Church.' Matt. xvi. 18, 19. (Let. 2, § 40.)—We give this, very important indeed, and very satisfactory if it were true; as a specimen of the superficial and flippant manner in which Cobbett makes the most unwarrantable assertions, without the least glance at the triumphant manner in which they have been a thousand times overthrown. To talk of Christ as the origin of the Catholic, meaning the Popish Church, is no production of evidence, but the contemptible trifling of a man, who gives us as proof a statement of the thing to be proved. Anxious to prevent trouble to our readers, we shall not insert in our pages, all that is most familiar to every one, except where a reference to its familiarity will convict Cobbett of the greatest unfairness in omitting to notice it. This is the case with the above-cited address to Peter. Peter had borne a testimony,—a testimony under the circumstances in which it was given, peculiarly explicit, to the character of Christ: "And Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Saviour acknowledged the importance of this testimony, and declared in reply, that upon it, as a firm foundation, as a rock, he would establish his Church—not on Peter,—but on the truth which Peter had confessed. The name Peter, signifying "a stone, or moveable piece of rock," was not given to the Apostle on this occasion as declarative of his appointment to be the Head of the Church, but was a mere repetition of the name bestowed upon him on his first acquaintance with the Saviour. (John 1, 42.) There is also in the original, to be observed, a studied and grammatical distinction between the Apostle's name, and the rock on which the Church was to be founded, necessarily referring the latter to the Apostle's confession. Peter (*πέτρος*) a stone, and the rock (*ταύτη ἡ πέτρα*) are two different words, of different use and signification. Besides, what strongly disposes us, inde-

pendent, of these considerations, to reject the Catholic interpretation of the text, is the fact, that it would be a violation of the design uniformly preserved by the Saviour throughout the whole of his Ministry towards his disciples. This design was to preserve an equality among them, and to check the least desire for superiority, or official distinction. (See Matt. 18, 1, &c. 23, 11, Mark 9, 34, Luke 9, 46-22, 24, &c.) The construction we reject does scarcely more violence to the text in question, than if admitted, to the spirit and intent of the general conduct of Christ; and surely, we may safely conclude, that what he could not have purposed he never uttered.

In connection with this, we attach the greatest importance to the very slender nature of the proof which Roman Catholics ever pretend to adduce from the Sacred volume. A man, like the writer before us, whose whole study, it is to dazzle by the intemperance of his language, without caring for evidence, may be expected to say, "the Catholic Church originated with Jesus Christ himself;" but, we generally find the advocates of Papal usurpation most anxious to impress our minds with their views of its history, rather than with any reference to its foundation in the will or words of Christ. It is easy to talk of EARNERS and COUNCILS, because their inconsistencies afford many materials for dispute, and particularly for perplexing the uninformed; but every Roman Catholic finds it dangerous to go to "the law and the testimony," and to place his finger on the chapter and verse of that volume which should be consulted as the only statute book in the kingdom of Christ. It would be surprizing, if, supposing the authority of the Papedom to be Divine, no recognition of it could be found in the New Testament,—no allusion to it in the writings of Peter,—no reference to it in the letters of the other Apostles. Yet ground for this surprize does exist. Never did any tyrant-usurper in the world ever find it more difficult to recommend his authority by the laws he had broken, than the

Pope of Rome find it impossible to establish his dominion over the Christian Church by the inspired rule of our faith. A man who, in the accidental possession of power, has triumphed over the wishes of a nation, and in open violation of its acknowledged laws and general feeling, has made his way to an uncertain, disputed, and despised government, is the best emblem the world can furnish of a Papal Usurper.

Were it may be necessary to observe, that speaking in his second letter of Papal secession, Cabbett is evidently embarrassed by the recollection of what in page 11 we have quoted from his first letter. "When I said in paragraph 10, that it might be said that there was no Pope seated at Rome for the first three hundred years, I by no means meant to admit the fact, but to get rid of a pretence, which at any rate could not apply to England, which was converted to Christianity by missionaries sent by a Pope, the successor of other Popes, who had been seated at Rome for hundreds of years. (Let. 2, § 41). This is an amusing specimen of the manner in which an overloaded and halting writer is sure to fall into the grossest absurdities. If he did not mean to admit the fact, what did he mean, when, in the voluntary management of his subject he asserted that it might be said. If he means that it was admitted merely for the sake of argument, and not as the result of his own convictions, he gave his opponent all the benefit of it as a fact for the time, and now in denying it must change his argument, and array the proofs, which it was not before convenient for him to produce. But in vain we seek for proof; we are met with nothing but another gratuitous assertion. England, he states, was converted under the direction of a successor to the Popes of several hundred years; and in this case he allows it might be said, though mark, and understand it if you can, he does not admit the fact,—"that there was no Pope for the first three hundred years;" and for this permission to say something, the truth of which he denies, but from the support of which denial he meanly slips away,—for this conceding

permission, the powerful reason, was, we are told, "to get rid of a pretence which at any rate could not apply to England!" What pretence was in question, and how was it got rid of? Does he in paragraph 12, when we are allowed to say something which we are not allowed to maintain, utter the word of England? Does not the whole paragraph relate, without a single reference to any local restriction, to the general subject of Papal succession? Besides, in relation to England, is the pretence that there was no Pope for three hundred years, a subject of no importance? Are we as Englishmen expected to submit our freedom in religion to an authority *in antient*, which at the same time we are allowed to describe as *inconsistent*? If Cobden, to get rid of a troublesome pretence, will let his admission stand, he must not imagine, that he gives any thing by this article, for we found upon it the most scornful rejection of Papal authority, or if he still meet the pretence in question, — dare boldly to look his opponent in the face; and withdraw his admission, — we will speedily prove, that his principle is as false, as the manner in which he uses it is contemptible. But let us hear him, as he proceeds. He goes on; not as might naturally be expected, to confirm his denial, of the point in dispute, but to account for our statement of it as a fact after all, "The truth is, (he says) that from the persecutions which for the first three hundred years, the Church underwent, the *Chief Bishops*, successors of St. Peter, had not always the means of openly maintaining their supremacy; but they always existed, — there was always a *Chief Bishop*, and his supremacy was always acknowledged by the Church, — that is to say, by all the Christians then in the world."

If Cobden did not richly deserve the humiliation to which he has reduced himself, it would be distressing to see a man thus stumbling and flinching under the weight of a bad cause, — thus asserting, denying, re-asserting, and finally flying off from his subject with an equivocation too indolent to answer his

deep design. The renowned Chieftains of Rome, it appears, for the space of three centuries, could not openly maintain their supremacy, from which it follows, at least on all the principles of reasoning by which human opinions have been regulated since the Creation, that during this period they were not supreme, they were governed, restrained, or depressed by some paramount power. How then, we ask, can the Papist assert their ancient and uninterrupted supremacy? Cobbett replies, because *they always existed*! This is really trifling in a manner, for which a man deserves to have every page he has written committed to the flames. What order of intellect, whether among Protestants or Catholics, was Cobbett addressing, when he required his readers, by his right to subvert every law of argument and faith, to believe, that if a certain class of men existed, they must always have been supreme,—that they remained supreme when they could not maintain their supremacy;—in addition to which, we are sagely told for the conclusion of the sentence, that this supremacy, which could not be openly maintained, was acknowledged by all the Christians in the world! Such sentences as these outrage common sense, and present us with the most disgraceful prostration of intellect before the prejudice of party. It is difficult to conceive how the author of absurdities so palpable, can ever maintain a reputation for talent; and without much superstition, the suspicion is likely to arise, that for the base misdirection of his influence, the same judicial infatuation has befallen him, as did the once talented ANTIQUARIUS, whose counsel God turned into foolishness.

The succession, the uninterrupted succession of the Popes, is again and again dwelt upon by Cobbett with the greatest complacency and triumph; and, while we can discern in this subject little but what reflects disgrace on the Roman Catholic Church, he repeats it, as if it established an indisputable authority in opposition to the Reformation. There is, we are told, the most satisfactory evidence, that the chain of this

succession has remained unbroken from the time of Peter to the present day. (Lect. 2, § 41.)—Again, "The Popedom, or Office of Pope continued in existence through all the great and repeated revolutions of Kingdoms and Empires. The Roman Empire, which was at the height of its glory at the beginning of the Christian era, and which extended indeed, nearly over the whole of Europe, and part of Africa and Asia, crumbled all to pieces, yet the Popedom remained; and at the time when the devastation, commonly called the 'Reformation' of England began, there had been, during the fifteen hundred years, about ~~two hundred and sixty~~ *two hundred and sixty* Popes, following each other in due and unbroken succession." (Lect. 2, § 43).—Let us for a few moments examine the links of this chain, and endeavour to ascertain the nature of this boasted succession. We pass by the difficulty of deciding on the exact number of these who are to be venerated as Popes, and on the impossibility of preventing disputes in chronological arrangements, and desire to know what the fact of an uninterrupted succession in the Pontificate proves? What does the Roman Catholic gain by having it granted that there have always been Pastors or Bishops at Rome? Let it be observed, that when we are told in a haughty tone by a confident Papist, that the chain of Papal succession is unbroken, it is intended to impress us with the idea, that a sacred and indisputable authority has always been preserved in the office of the Popedom, and in despising this office in modern times, we are violating a divine appointment, which we confess must have been of indispensable obligation in the days of primitive Christianity; we are in short required to believe, that what we must have respected in the time of Apostolic inspiration, is, as an uncontradicted fact of History, continued to this remote age. Here we wish our readers most distinctly to notice, that a bare succession to the inheritance of power will not prove the authority of the Pope, but that a character and conduct according with the sacred nature of his pretensions, are necessary

to confirm his claims. A Religious establishment can never proceed upon an oblivion of the rules and principles of Religion, and as it is in this case, a *sacred* authority which is pleaded for, the succession of Infidels, Adulterers, and Murderers, proves nothing in its support! When the authority of an individual is assumed and acknowledged upon certain principles, that authority is never continued in his successors where these principles are not recognized; and where a man of peculiar character is proposed as the head or example of those who come after him, those only are in truth his successors, who in the same situation exemplify the same character. But among the Bishops of Rome, there is little identity of character or conduct to be discovered; they possess scarcely any thing in common but unhallowed ambition, and a name which blind superstition has consecrated to their use. They form a crowd where the good and bad have unfortunately been mingled, but where the bad have attained to an awful superiority.

Now, in the first place, *we deny the continuance in the Church of Christ of any Office which the Apostle Peter was appointed to hold.* The Apostolic Office was peculiar to the Apostolic age, and at the same time peculiar to those few men who were originally and exclusively entitled Apostles in the New Testament. In the sacred History, or in the writings of the earliest Christians, this office is never confounded with the Pastorate in any instance; and even Eusebius, who is the chief authority for the presumption that Peter was ever at Rome, speaks of him in a manner inconsistent with his settlement as a Pastor.—We shall here solicit the attention of the reader to an extract from Dr. Campbell, on the extraordinary nature and temporary duration of the Apostolic Office. “First, the indispensable requisites in an Apostle sufficiently demonstrate, that this office could be but temporary. It was necessary that he should be one who had seen Jesus Christ in the flesh, after his Resurrection. Accordingly

they were all especially destined to serve as eye witnesses to the world of this great event, the hinge on which the truth of Christianity depended. The character of an Apostle is briefly described by Peter, who was the first of the Apostolical College, as one ordained to be a witness of Christ's resurrection—Acts 1, 22—a circumstance of which he often makes mention, in his speeches both to the rulers and the people. See Acts 2, 32,—3, 15—5, 32—10, 41—13, 31. And if so, the office, from its nature and design, could not have an existence after the extinction of that generation."

"Secondly, the Apostles were distinguished by prerogatives which did not descend to any after them. Of this kind, was first, their receiving their mission immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ, not mediately through any human ordination or appointment: of this kind also, was secondly, the power of conferring, by imposition of hands, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit on whomsoever they would; and thirdly, the knowledge they had by inspiration of the whole doctrine of Christ."

"Thirdly, their mission was of quite a different kind from that of any ordinary Pastor. It was to propagate the gospel throughout the world, both among Jews and Pagans, and not to take the charge of any particular flock. The terms of their commission are 'Go and teach all nations.' Again, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' No doubt they may be styled Bishops or Overseers, but in a sense very different from that in which it is applied to the Inspector over the inhabitants of a particular district. They were universal Bishops; the whole Church, or rather the whole Earth was their charge, and they were all colleagues one of another. For to give the same sentiments in the words of Chrysostom, Εὐαγγελιστὰς ὅλοι οἱ ἀποστόλοι, ἀποστόλοι οἱ ὅλοι εὐαγγελιστὰς."

“ ἔστη καὶ πολλοὶ διηφοροὶ λαμβαναίτες, ἀλλὰ
 “ πάντες κοινῇ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐμπιστεύθησαν.—

“ ‘The Apostles were constituted of God, rulers, not each
 “ over a separate nation or city, but all were entrusted with
 “ the world in common.’ If so, to have limited themselves to
 “ any thing less, would have been disobedience to the express
 “ command they had received from their Master, to go into
 “ all nations, and to preach the gospel to every creature. If,
 “ in the latter part of the lives of any of them, they were,
 “ through age and infirmities, confined to one place, that
 “ place would naturally fall under the immediate inspection
 “ of such. And this, if even so much as this, is all that has
 “ given rise to the tradition, for there is nothing like histori-
 “ cal evidence in the case, that any of them were Bishops or
 “ Pastors of particular Churches. Nay, in some instances, it
 “ is plain, that the tradition has originated from the single
 “ circumstance, that the first Pastors, in such a Church, were
 “ appointed by such an Apostle. Hence it has arisen, that
 “ the Bishops of different Churches have claimed (and, pro-
 “ bably with equal truth) to be the successors of the same
 “ Apostle.”

“ Fourthly, and lastly, as a full proof that this matter was
 “ thus universally understood, both in their own age, and in the
 “ times immediately succeeding, no one, on the death of an
 “ Apostle, was ever substituted in his room, and when that
 “ original sacred College was extinct, the title became extinct
 “ with it. The election of Matthias by the Apostles, in the
 “ room of Judas, is no exception, as it was previous to their
 “ entering on their charge. They knew it was their Master’s
 “ intention, that twelve Missionaries, from among those who
 “ had attended his ministry on the earth, should be employed
 “ as ocular witnesses to attest his Resurrection, on which
 “ the divinity of his Religion depended. The words of Peter
 “ on this occasion, are an ample confirmation of all that has

been said, both in regard to the end of the office, and the qualifications requisite in the person who fills it, at the same time that they afford a demonstration of the absurdity as well as arrogance of modern pretenders—Acts 1. 21, 22. But afterwards, when the Apostle James, the brother of John, was put to death by Herod, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, we find no mention made of a successor. Nor did the subsequent admission of Paul and Barnabas to the Apostleship, form any exception from what has been advanced; for they come not as successors to any one, but were specially called by the Holy Spirit as Apostles, particularly to the Gentiles; and in them also were found the qualifications requisite for the testimony, which, as Apostles, they were to give.”*

These remarks appear to us conclusive, and abundantly prove, that Peter held an office which expired with himself, and which was incompatible with any other capable of transmission. Thus the first link in this important chain is completely broken, and supposing it to be subsequently entire, it is not supported from that high authority which is absolutely necessary to support the Papal system, but closely encircles it in the bondage of error and corruption, “*Sed domitus catend.*” —Whoever was the first Bishop, Presbyter, or Pastor at Rome, he must have been a very different man from the Gregories and Leos of later days; and though in the fourth century, the establishment of Christianity by Constantine, gave an opportunity to the Pastor of this Church to make his way to honour and wealth, it was not, we have seen, till the seventh century, that he pretended to be the Pope, or Universal Bishop. The manner in which we have shown that Gregory opposed the Bishop of Constantinople, contrasted with the appearance of Boniface, inflated with the pride of the empty but characteristic title of his successors, breaks another link in this chain, if it be any thing like a chain of Christian

* Lectures on Eccles. Hist, Lect. 2.

doctrine and practice. From this time, we are presented with Papal succession, under a new aspect, and upon principles once abhorred by the Church; but we shall be able to prove, that the succession of the Popes of Rome, properly so called, has been disputed, interrupted, and exposed in all those changes which are the natural result of ambition and avarice, together with other vices the most revolting to religion and humanity. It is always an unpleasant task to cast the odium of crime on any system, supported by men who claim our respect; and however agreeable it may be to Cobbett's habits to exhibit and exaggerate all the crimes which can be found in the most distant or accidental relation to Protestantism, we would rather draw a veil over these enormities which his mode of attack upon our history compels us to notice. But, when we are called to surrender our faith, our reason, and our consciences, to men whose authority is founded on their succession to a certain office, we are obliged to expose the corruption of that office, and the nature of this succession; and though bound to extenuate nothing, we are deeply anxious to set nothing down in malice.

THE SUCCESSION OF THE POPES OF ROME CAN NEVER BE APPEALED TO AS A MOTIVE TO OUR CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION, OR OUR COMMON RESPECT, ON ACCOUNT OF THE ATROCIOUS CRIMES WITH WHICH THEY ARE CHARGEABLE.

Justice must condemn, and Superstition be startled into something like reason, when we think of their dethronement of each other, and especially when we behold the reigning Pontiff ~~swayed~~ *swayed* WITH THE BLOOD OF HIS PREDECESSOR.*—And though the excitement of wars, in which we discover assiduity and intrigue, is enough to blot the reputation of the Papedom for ever, our just indignation becomes extreme, when we read of the violations of common honesty, by which

* Thus in the tenth century, Christopher dethroned Leo V.; and Sergius III. cast Christopher into prison; John XIV. was also murdered by Boniface VII.—MOSHEIM, Cent. 10, c. 2.

this part of their conduct is distinguished.† But not to dwell on this; have not many of the Popes disgraced themselves by gross immorality, and mingled with the common herd of sensualists? They have not merely been guilty of that ambition to which their elevation, and the blind devotion of their subjects invited them, but have indulged in the most lawless gratifications known to the meanest depravity, cherishing and exhibiting those vices which were in direct opposition to the rule of their station.‡ Without commenting on their opposi-

† For instance, Pope Zachary 751, justified and sheltered the usurpation of Pepin. This man was Mayor of the Palace to Childeric III. King of France, and after having published to the States of the Realm, his design of dethroning his Sovereign, was obliged to refer to the decision of the Pope. The negative of this Pontiff would most likely have prevented the scandalous Revolution, and his affirmative must be considered as its cause, placing all its responsibility and aggravated criminality upon the holy see of Rome: Zachary with dreadful impiety, gave Pepin the sanction of a divine law; Stephen II. confirmed this decision, dissolved the obligation under which Pepin's oath to Childeric had placed him, and which the infallible Zachary, with admirable consistency had neglected; and in addition to this, assented and crowned the Usurper a second time!—MOSHEIM, Cent. 8. c. 2.

In the 13th Cent. Pascal II. involved Germany in a devastating, unnatural, and parricidal war. He was impious enough to encourage the Son to dethrone the Father, and dissolved the oath of fidelity and obedience which the former had taken, thus pretending by power of his high office, to suspend the eternal obligations of virtue and humanity. These are but two instances from a great number, in which the disastrous changes which shook Europe for Centuries, are to be attributed to the presumption and intrigue of the Popes of Rome more than to any other cause.—MOSHEIM, Cent. 12. c. 2.

‡ John X. of the 10th Cent. openly disgraced his Pontificate by the enormity of his vices—a Pontificate which in fact he owed to the influence of his Mistress with the Count of Tuscany, her Seneschal: Another Count of Tuscany, however, instigated by Matilda, the daughter of this Pontiff's Mistress, first imprisoned, and then murdered him. Yet this infamous woman, let it also be observed, was but making way for the elevation of her son, John XI. who was also the son of Sergius III., mentioned in a former note! The mind sickens at such scenes of villainy and licentiousness, surprised that any one can dare to dishonor Religion so far, as to rank the most vicious of men the successors of St. Peter, and in unintermitted series the holy guides of the Church. In the 13th Cent. the Romish Church was tainted to the core, so that a virtuous man when raised to the Papedom, could not be endured. Celestine V. had accepted it with reluctance, but was soon advised to resign

tion to Religion in enforcing Clerical Celibacy, what can we think of men who acted in open defiance of the rigid virtue, which this Institution was pretended to enforce, and who instead of being marked by holy abstraction from the relations and domestic cares of life, allowed their lawyers and canonists to maintain, and by their own conduct confirmed, the loosest and most demoralizing principles of indulgence. Mahomet in his fiction of the Houris, never gave so effective a sanction to the most riotous passions of the corrupt heart as many of the Popes have afforded by their contempt of virtue, and legal enactments in favour of vice. On this disgusting subject we might multiply censures and facts at pleasure, but the rule, "*Maxima debetur puero reverentia*," forbids us to enlarge. Now, we ask on what principle can men of this description be supposed to transmit to each other, in uninterrupted succession, a claim to our veneration, and a dominion over our faith? In that respect in which Roman Catholics themselves represent the Apostle Peter to have been head of the Church, we maintain many of the Popes of Rome have forfeited every claim to be considered his successors. We admit for the mo-

an authority which was despised as virtuous, but which he had too much principle to retain by pandering to vice. His successor, Boniface VIII., was, in 1303, openly accused of heresy, simony, and other vices, by the Peers of France, who at the same time demanded a general Council of the Church, for the deposition of so execrable a Pontiff. Alexander VI. had five Children, whom he was not ashamed to own, and on whose account, neglecting the interests of the Church, he engaged in a series of the most atrocious crimes. "The life and actions, (it has been said) of this man, prove that there was a Nero among the Popes as well as among the Emperors."—Paul III. is renowned for his licentious exploits, too gross to be repeated. No relations of life kept him within the bounds of decency; while the attempt to conceal some of his atrocities, led him to poison his own daughter, whose violent death at his hands was not more unnatural than the conduct which hurried him to this step.—See MacLaine's note on Mosheim, Cent. 16, Sec. 3, with reference to KRISLINGIUS, SCHELHORN, and SLRIDAN. Paul III. was succeeded by Julius III., who immediately constituted the Keeper of his Monies, a Member of the Holy College of Cardinals, and when reproached for this measure, replied by asking, "what virtue had been discovered in him that he should have been elected Pope?"—IBID.

went, for the sake of meeting our opponents on their own ground, that Peter was, in a peculiar sense appointed the infallible guide of the whole world ; but we add that it could only have been as an inspired, devoted, and holy man, that this appointment was made, and therefore, by necessary consequence, when the Bishops of Rome were unholy and guilty of flagrant crimes, the line of sacred authority was broken, and the succession of men, destined by the Almighty to the dominion of the Church, was openly interrupted. It is not enough to reply that there were always Bishops of Rome ; this will not prove that they were always guides of the faithful, any more than it will establish a supremacy of power which was always in dispute. If they were not holy men, they had no right to the station into which they had intruded themselves, and however their infamous names may serve to fill up the vacancies of a chronological record, upon every principle which applies to authority in the Church, they interrupted the succession of St. Peter. Once admit that the usurpation of political power entitled a man to the direction of the faith of the world, whatever was his conduct, and you subvert the foundation of the Papacy, as a religious establishment ; and virtually maintain the monstrous inconsistency, that a man who was not a Christian, was divinely appointed to be the head of the Christian Church. By all those considerations which apply to the Divine appointment of such a head we must allow, that it was the Christian made the Pope ; and not the Pope the Christian. If the Church of Christ be under a holy superintendence, it cannot be supposed, that when a most abandoned wretch, and perhaps an infidel, stepped into the Apostolic chair, the world was to bow before him as the vicerent of the Almighty. Thus when the uninterrupted succession of the Popes is contended for, as implying a regular transmission of sacred authority, from Peter to Leo XII., injury is done to the pious feelings of every heart, an oblivion of all moral distinction takes place and every principle of virtue, which

renders religion valuable to mankind, is abandoned to contempt. The uninterrupted succession, as it is called, of the Popes of Rome, has been maintained by the interruption of all godliness. To say that a character is nothing in the highest Christian Office it is possible to hold, is to publish an infamous libel on the holy nature of Christianity, the Pope sits in the scoffs of Infidelity, as the grossest of all delusions. The dreadful implety of such a defence of the Popedom, is only equalled by the folly of bestowing the epithet of *Holiness* on a man who violates all its obligations, and warrants our confident application to him of the emphatic language of Scripture, in which we believe him to have been described by the unerring pen of Inspiration, as "THE MAN OF SIN."

T

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THE
PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

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THE History of Papal succession unfolds a long series of views utterly inconsistent with the right of the Pope to sacred legislation ; and as this theme enters essentially into the dispute between Protestants and Roman Catholics, and is a subject of perpetual and confident reference in the pages of Cobbett, it appears necessary to examine it most carefully. We shall, therefore, attempt to comprize the leading facts of this history within a small compass, and arrange them in order, under five or six particulars.—In our last we proved, **THAT THE SUCCESSION OF THE POPES OF ROME CAN NEVER BE APPEALED TO AS A MOTIVE TO OUR CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION, OR OUR COMMON RESPECT, ON ACCOUNT OF THE ATROCIOUS CRIMES WITH WHICH THEY ARE CHARGEABLE.**—We now add that,

MANY OF THE POPES HAVE BEEN IMPOSED ON THE CHURCH BY THE ARBITRARY INTERFERENCE OF SECULAR POWER.

It is amusing to contrast the proud claims of the Roman Pontiff at some periods, with the most slavish subjection at others ; to see one Pope receiving his authority from the hands of a Prince, whose will he was obliged to study as his law ; and another, haughtily pretending to the right of constituting the Governors of Europe, as if the world had been bound to

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confess, that by him Kings reigned and Princes decreed justice. We scarcely know which merits the severest condemnation, the willing slavery of some Popes to political power, or the unparalleled assumption of this power by others. When, however, we discover that Counts, Kings, and Emperors have often had the sole nomination of the Popes, deposing some in favour of creatures of their own, we are at a loss to know, on what principle the uninterrupted succession of infallible guides in the Popedom is to be maintained. If one Pope was nothing more than the instrument of political design in the hands of an ambitious Prince, we are obliged to conclude, that the elevation of such a man to the Pontificate, interrupted the vaunted succession of St. Peter. And when, indeed, we reflect on the infamous character of many of the Romish Bishops, the presumption naturally arises in our minds, that the church would never have raised to its government men so abandoned, if its religious authority had not been lost—if the sceptre of St. Peter had not been wrested from the impotent grasp of men misnamed his successors—if, in short, the officers of the church had not been reduced to the most abject dependence on turbulent and intriguing laymen. Such a presumption is abundantly confirmed by the uncontradicted history of the case.* Carrying along with us the conviction, that the office

* John X. mentioned in a former note, owed his elevation to Alberic, Count of Tuscany. The Roman Consul, Alberic II. in 956, raised his son Octavian, a mere boy, to the Pontificate. He invited Otho the Great into Italy, to make war on the Italian King, but having grossly violated his engagements, Otho dethroned him, and appointed Leo VIII.; and when afterwards the Romans had elected Benedict V., in opposition to Leo, the Emperor annulled this election, and restored his own Pope. HERE IS ONE INSTANCE OF A POPE FORCED UPON THE ROMANS IN CONTEMPT OF THEIR OWN APPOINTMENT. Mosheim on these facts gives as his authority, among others, the celebrated Muratori's *SCRIPTORES RERUM ITALICARUM*.---In the close of the same century, we have the Emperor Otho III. and Crescens the Roman Consul, interfering with the Church, so as to elevate rival Popes. MURATORI'S *ANNALES ITALIE*.---In the 11th Cent. Benedict VIII. was obliged by the success of his rival, to solicit the aid of Henry II. by whom he was reinstated

of successor to St. Peter, (supposing such ever to have existed) is a sacred one; and that its authority, to be legitimate in any instance, must be sacred in its foundation and exercise, we maintain, that the succession to the Popedom, of men who in the origin and progress of their power, were the mere instruments of mighty despots, is at variance with the supposition of their succession to Religious supremacy.

Again, THE AUTHORITY OF THE POPedom, WHEN IT DID NOT ORIGINATE IN THE ARBITRARY APPOINTMENT OF POLITICAL POWER, WAS EXTENDED AND CONFIRMED BY POLITICAL INTRIGUE.

It might be expected that the History of the Church would show us this authority advancing to its summit, with the majesty and benignity of divine truth, and that its triumphs would be established in the consciences of men, and proclaimed by

in the Chair from which he had been expelled. Benedict IX. on account of his crimes was degraded at Rome, but restored by the Emperor Conrad; and when after this, there were three contending Popes, Henry III. called a Council, which under his direction, declared all the three unworthy, and appointed another. Damasus II. was elected by the Emperor in Germany, and as a Prince sends his Ambassador or Representative to a distant Country, he sent this Pope to Italy, to assume the Pontificate by his authority. Even after the attempt of Nicholas II. to abridge the secular power in election, Ambassadors were sent to Henry IV. King of the Romans, to confirm the appointment of the famous HILDEBRAND, or Gregory VII. Yet this Pope was the most arrogant in his claims, and when seated in his chair, demanded of the King of the Romans an avowal of his allegiance, and had the effrontery to send him the form of oath to be taken. GREGORY'S EPISTLES, B. 6, Ep. 3.—In this Century the arrogance of the Pontiff interfering with the wonted authority of the Emperor, gave rise to the two great factions of the GUELPHS and GIBBELINES, which convulsed both Germany and Italy for the space of three Centuries, the former supporting the Pope, and the latter the Emperor. ROBERTSON'S CHARLES V. vol. I. sect. 31.—It ought never to be pretended that men placed in the Papal Chair by the secular arm, and continued there by its support, were the successors of Peter. As well might we be told, because he numbers as WILLIAM I. among our Kings, that the Duke of Normandy was lawful successor to Edward the Confessor, when all History records his reign as an usurpation. Every appointment to which this note refers, must be considered an intrusion of the World into the Church, interrupting the course of Apostolic authority.

the spontaneous effusions of the devoted heart. In Mahomedanism we look for "wars and rumours of wars," and expect the stream of succession in the Caliphate to be defiled with crime, and crimson with blood; but the Papal system ought to recommend itself to our approbation by its spiritual instrumentality, conferring a religious, instead of a worldly or political character on all its conquests. But, the far greater number of the Popes have never been able to imitate the Holy Apostle, and say, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal;" for the chief contentions they have sustained have been for power,—contentions in which spiritual weapons were seldom sought, and never found to prevail. Almost every accession to their greatness which the Popes have obtained at different periods, has been marked by a prelude of crime and intrigue. Their dominion has grown out of a compact with Princes, by which they have lent ambitious monarchs the aid of their spiritual thunders, in return for which these obliged Sons of the Church, have surrendered some previously disputed point to their Holy Allies, or assisted them in their aggressions on less fortunate neighbours. In connection with this, cabals have been formed—misunderstandings multiplied—and jealousies fomented among Princes, by the great head of the Church and plenary source of charity, that he might appear among them with the advantage of an arbitrator; never forgetting to press some claim on the side where it appeared most important, by threatening in case of refusal, to throw the weight of his influence on the other.† To this we may add, in-

† In illustrating these statements we might easily transcribe the whole Papal History. The preference of Rome to Constantinople by Phocas must not be forgotten, for this important event was the result of political intrigue. It was not however, till the 8th century, that the Popes were able to assume the state of temporal Princes, and this chiefly resulted from the countenance which Zachary and Stephen gave the usurper Pepin. Aistulphus, King of the Lombards, terrified the Pope by the prospect of placing Rome under a Lombard yoke. At the entreaty therefore of the holy man to whom he was indebted for freeing him from the bondage of an oath he had violated, Pepin

Excommunications, and that system of persecution by which all difference of opinion has been proscribed under the name of heresy, and heretics doomed to the prison and the stake: That man must be marked by a disregard of virtue in the highest offices of religion which would expose him to infamy in social or civil life—who with all its history before him can respect the succession of the Roman Pontiff as placing on his conscience an imperative obligation to submit to the most profound. To talk of the power which has been purchased from Princes by conniving at their crimes, or assisting them in the commission of them—or which at

undertook to break this alarming power, and gave the Exarchate of Ravenna, with other temporalities, to the Pontiff and his successors for ever. Were it worthy of remark, that Stephen forged a letter purporting to be from Peter himself, to the French Monarch, threatening him by the Holy Trinity and by his own Apostleship, that if he would not war on his account he should be rejected from Heaven! The enterprising and politic Charlemagne desired the dominion of the whole Western Empire, and to this he found the Roman Pontiff willing to be subservient, provided he would free him from all fears of the Lombards. Charlemagne subverted their authority, and proclaimed himself King of the Lombards, confirming and extending Pepin's grant of territory. In addition to this he was soon after proclaimed Emperor of the West, at Rome, and finding it his interest to place a check in Italy on the Princes he subdued, he granted the Church an extensive jurisdiction. This period is also distinguished by intrigue of a worse kind, if possible, than mere activity in political revolutions; for to this century most probably are to be referred, the celebrated forgeries of the DECRETALS, and DONATION OF CONSTANTINE,—“the two magic pillars (as Mr. Gibbon calls them) of the spiritual and temporal dominion of the Popes”—by the latter of which it was pretended that Constantine had made a grant to the Church of the free and perpetual sovereignty of Rome, Italy, and the provinces of the West; a grant which the Popes represented as placing a solemn obligation on the Princes of succeeding centuries; but which is now universally decided as a palpable forgery. The descendants of Charlemagne were far inferior to this great Prince in capacity and power, and the Empire he established was at length divided. When after the death of Louis II. there were several competitors for the Empire, the Pope and Italian Princes claimed the right of nominating to the Imperial Throne, and amidst the disturbances which followed for a long period, established their authority by pressing it: when from political disunion it was dangerous to oppose it. The increase of Pontifical authority by Hildebrand, is universally known to be

favourable junctures has been obtained by the legerdemain of state, and in many instances wrested from its lawful possessor by the iron hand of violence,—to talk of such power being the authority of St. Peter, transmitted in “due and unbroken succession to the present time,” is a falsehood—a lie in the face of history—only equalled by the hardened contempt of principle which the Popes themselves manifested when they claimed towns and cities as the patrimony of a man who was poor and unpensioned, and which cities had never been known to have the least connection with the Church.

connected with factions the most turbulent and disgraceful. On the justice, policy, and improving tendency of the Crusades, different opinions may be formed, but it will scarcely be questioned, either by Catholics or Protestants, that they gave immense advantage to the authority of the Popes. They withdrew the jealous attention of Princes from Rome, and left the most intriguing men in the world to plod on without interruption. At the present day, when the Crusades must be viewed at best as absurd and fanatical, their influence on the power of the Popedom, will be far from inspiring our respect. An attentive inspection of their History will also unfold base and dishonourable conduct on the part of Popes towards certain Princes, when absent from their people in the Holy Land. Every one knows how England suffered by the encouragement given to Prince John and Henry of France, during the absence of Richard I. But the measures of Gregory IX. with the Emperor, is a striking illustration of the subtilty which mixed with this Pontiff's zeal for the deliverance of Jerusalem. Frederick was obliged by sickness to delay a projected Crusade, when the Pope excommunicated him! He, however, entered upon it at a subsequent period, when Gregory perfidiously attacked his dominions, and attempted to involve him in a war with other European powers.... In the 13th Cent. the Pontificate assumed an imposing appearance under the administration of Innocent III. and Nicholas II. Innocent succeeded in reducing the Prefect of Rome to dependance, and seized on Ancona, Spoleto, and Assisi, and various Cities, which he had the audacity to pretend belonged to the patrimony of St. Peter. He also supported the pretensions of Otto IV. to the Empire, in opposition to Philip, Duke of Swabia, but as soon as he thought Otto likely to check his tyranny, he excommunicated him, and raised another to his throne. This is the man, whose memory is ever to be execrated by Englishmen, who, persisting in his appointment of an Archbishop of Canterbury, in opposition to John, by his interdicts and excommunications, reduced this weak Prince to the most abject submission. The surrender of the British Crown to the Pope's legate, comes home to our National feelings, as an evidence of the unallowable nature of those means by which Papal authority has been extended....

THE MODE OF ELECTION TO THE PONTIFICATE in the Church was FOR AGES UNSETTLED AND UNCERTAIN.

The Church of Rome has seldom attempted to keep "the noiseless tepor" of a religious course, but has often disturbed its foundations, and unsettled its whole superstructure, by the alliance it has sought to form with men and institutions it ought to have despised. But we may perhaps be told, that we should judge of the Church by its Canons or Sacred Rules; and therefore, without dwelling on the arbitrary interference of Political power, or the great reproach of Political intrigue

The recollection of this event must inflame every relic of patriotism, kindling our feelings into the severest and holiest indignation. That man does not deserve the privileges or name of an Englishman, who can read this page of our History without uttering the exclamation of contempt and abhorrence. During the rivalry of Charles V. and Francis I. the conduct of Pope Leo was subtle, hesitating, and treacherous. Having reason to dread the election of either of these powerful Monarchs, he exhorted the German Princes to elect one of their own number. When the interests of Charles appeared predominating, he encouraged the French King, aiming all along so to ferment their natural jealousy, as to disappoint them both. He persisted in his opposition to Charles, till finding this Prince on the eve of success, he made him a voluntary offer of a Dispensation to hold the Imperial Crown, in conjunction with that of Naples, against which he had previously protested. After the election had been determined, he alternately soothed and irritated these great rivals; and when they were preparing to convulse Europe by war, and he was courted by both parties, he hesitated for a time, professed his impartiality and strict neutrality,---then made a compact with Francis for the division of Naples; and entered, in a short time, into a secret contract with Charles, the chief design of which was, the aggrandizement of the Medicean family! From this time the History of the Reformation mingles with the politics of Europe, in the progress of which, the Popes showed greater anxiety for power in the Empire, than concern for the purity of Religion; and though we shall have occasion to notice it more particularly in a future number, we may just observe in this place, that the intrigues of the Pope with the Emperor, distinguished by duplicity and bad faith, placed Henry VIII. in that situation in which he was obliged indignantly to treat with the former. We may also mention in this place, the conduct of Julius II. in the 16th Cent. who completely sunk the character of the Minister of Religion in that of the Soldier. During his Pontificate, more than at any other period, the Church was MILITANT in the most worldly and degrading sense of the term, for the man who had been placed at its head, was constantly to be found leading an army and pressing a siege!--MORHEIM, ECCLES. HIST.

belonging to it, we will prove, that till a comparatively recent period, the Church had no fixed or determinate principle by which to regulate the succession of its Infallible Guides! For many Centuries the election to the Popedom was popular, i. e. the suffrages not only of the whole Roman Clergy, but also of the Nobility, Burgesses, and Assembly of the People, were collected, in addition to which, the Emperor's ratification was necessary. In the 11th Cent. Nicholas II. enacted a Law which was craftily intended to give a preponderance to the Cardinals, and to lower the privilege of the Emperor in the business. Though this Law for a time did little but create dissatisfaction and tumult, it laid the foundation for an entire change in the mode of Papal election. In the next Cent. Alexander III. destroyed the opposition with which it had been met, by making the principal mal-contents Members of the Electing College, and thus transferred the sole power of appointments to the Holy See, to the Cardinals in *conclave*.† If we listen to the manner in which Cobbett tells us of the succession of the Popes, we might expect every one to produce his special credentials of a Divine appointment,—we might be induced to believe the fables with which the History of some of the earliest Christian Bishops has been profusely garnished; and for instance, suppose that the Spirit in the form of a dove, has lighted on the head of the distinguished individual, removing by the visible sanction of Heaven, the possibility of contention or mistake. But, alas! for the credit of the Popedom, every expectation of this nature has been disappointed, and in this crisis—this “*dignus vindice nodus*”—no messenger has descended from Heaven, no sign has been visible, no voice has been audible,—all has been uncertainty and confusion,—and the bewildered Church knew not what rule to observe, till six or seven hundred years ago, seventy men, cycled Cardinals, agreed to take the business from others,

† Campbell's Lectures, Lect. 22. Mosheim, Cent. 11, c. 2.

and share its honours and profits among themselves in perpetual succession!

To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace;
 Not to be grave, exceeds all power of face.

**THE SUPREMACY AND EXTENT OF PONTIFICAL AUTHORITY,
 ARE LEFT IN UNCERTAINTY BY THE MEASURES OF THE ROMISH
 CHURCH.**

Every one is acquainted with the extreme caution with which the Roman Catholics of the present day, speak on these subjects. If we attribute to them the sentiments of their forefathers, they reproach us with a want of candour, and when we protest against the supremacy of the Pope over the Catholic subjects of a Protestant Prince, they frequently join us in our protest. But there is not only this uncertainty or inconsistency to be observed in the present day, something of the kind has always existed. The disputes of the Clergy with their Popes are so many evidences of this truth, while their writers have been at a loss to decide in what the Pope's infallibility consists. We are sometimes shocked by the ascription to him of the names and attributes of Deity; while at other times we are perplexed by distinctions between the Pope and the man—between his conduct as a Prince, and his decisions as head of the Church,—and thus it often happens, that when we are condemning the measures on which he insisted in the latter capacity, the Popedom is excused by referring them all to the former. But what we principally notice here, is the dispute on the respective authority of a Pope, and a Council. Each at different periods has been declared superior to the other:—For a Council of the subjected Church to direct its Infallible Head; or for this Infallible Head to be guided contrary to his own unerring judgment and holy inclinations, by a Council of his dependants, is an anomaly in legislation equalled in no other case. Hence Cardinal Bellarmine was nothing more than consistent when he said, that the very doubt whether a Council be greater than the Pope seems to

be absurd, because it would imply the contradiction that the supreme Pontiff is not supreme. § Now, to what quarter will a Roman Catholic look for supremacy? Is it not a fact, that the Church has always been at war within its pale on this head, and is left to continue the warfare to the end of time, without the possibility of appealing to any higher court than that which the question before us has already thrown into ungovernable confusion? Thus the succession of Peter is reduced to something which cannot be defined, and an infallible Church, losing sight of its pretended original, has left the seat and extent of its power in uncertainty.

THE POPES OF ROME HAVE CONTRADICTED THEMSELVES AMIDST THEIR CLAIMS TO INFALLIBILITY.

Representing themselves as successors to an inspired Apostle, they have defined their office to be, the infallible government of the Church; every instance, therefore, in which they have erred, and openly retracted their errors, interrupted, as far as they were concerned, the succession contended for. The chain, we might observe, is broken by the difference of any two Pontiffs;|| but not to dwell on the mass of error which has

§ The famous Council of Constance, 1414, decreed its own superiority. But in the Council of Basil, 1431, Pope Eugenius IV. contested the question, and though obliged to submit for a time, went so far afterwards, as at a Council called by himself, at Ferrara, 1438; in opposition to the assembled Fathers at Basil, to excommunicate the latter. They in their turn, deposed him, though in contempt of their pretended superiority, he maintained his jurisdiction over the greater part of the Church. 1458, Æneas Sylvius ascended the Chair, under the title of Pius II. This celebrated, but unprincipled man, had been the champion of the supremacy of Councils, in opposition to Eugenius, but upon his elevation to the Pontificate, prohibited all appeals to a Council, under the severest penalties. In 1463, he publicly retracted all he had uttered in defence of the Council of Basil, and boldly declared, that as Æneas Sylvius he was a damnable heretic, but that as Pius II. he was an orthodox Pontiff! The Council of Trent was marked by its deference to the Roman power, and though called to restore the long divided unity of the faith, left it as disjointed, if not worse than before.---MOSHIM, Cant. 15th, c. 2.

|| Honorius was condemned by a General Council at Constantinople, as A HERETIC AND AN ORGAN OF THE DEVIL, for favouring the doctrine of the Monotholites; and this was not merely the judgment of a Council, for it was confirmed by the Popes Agatho, and Leo II.

thus been accumulating for Centuries, we may challenge our opponents to establish by the agreement of his own acts and opinions, the infallibility of any single Pontiff, who was of importance to the Church.* Scarcely anything, be it doctrine or fact, can be proposed to the world so notoriously false, as this figment of Papal Infallibility; yet if the Roman Catholic become rational for a moment and deny it, he surrenders his only authority for the peculiarities of his Church. It is common, however, to neglect objections of this kind to the sacred authority of the Popes, and to look merely to the alleged fact of their succession as uninterrupted, supposing, that as England is said to have had an unbroken chain of Kings in its present Royal House, there have always been chief Bishops at Rome.—This leads us to observe,

* In the 6th Cent. there was a ridiculous but violent controversy concerning writings which favoured the Nestorian doctrine, called the **THREE CHAPTERS**. These Three Chapters were sometimes condemned and sometimes approved; amidst which uncertainty, Pope Virgilius shifted sides no fewer than five times. In the stormy controversy occasioned by Arius, Pope Liberius was like "a tree shaken by the wind." In deference to the Emperor Constantius, he first excommunicated Athanasius; but he soon revoked this sentence; yet, at the Council of Arles, permitted his Legates to sign Athanasius's condemnation. After this, he stood forth boldly in support of the opinions he had prosecuted, but was soon prevailed upon to sign a second time, the condemnation of the intrepid Athanasius. He now seemed bolder than ever, excused his former conduct without admitting a change in his opinions, and promised to continue a bigotted and persecuting Arian, but discovering that the Emperor had altered his views, he appeared to regard him as the supreme guide of his faith, and subscribed to the semi-Arian Confession! Lastly, in the time of Julian the Apostate, he returned again to Orthodoxy!

In the 14th Cent. John XXII. maintained opinions concerning the "Beatific Vision," which were generally disapproved. A Synod of the Gallican Church formally condemned them, when the French King, himself a Roman Catholic, sent him a copy of its decisions for his approval, threatening to burn him for heresy in case of refusal. Not possessing the courage or principle of a martyr, he acknowledged his fallibility. And when at the point of death, in presence of his assembled Clergy, he declared his belief of the opinions he had formerly opposed; and finally, that he might not be deemed a heretic, submitted himself to the judgment of the Church, whatever that might be!—See Campbell's Lectures. Lect. 14, *Medieval Cent.* 2. Cent. 14. &c.

THAT THE SUCCESSION OF THE POPEDOM HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN INTERRUPTED BY VACANCIES.

It has had its inter-regnums; and if the decapitation of Charles, and the Protectorate of Cromwell, interrupted the regal course in England, the chain of which Cobbett so confidently speaks, has been completely and violently severed. When the power of election was confined to the College of Cardinals, delays became common, for without the stimulus to speedy decisions which popular assemblies always possess, they were often occupied for years in adjusting their conflicting interests, before they could agree on a head.† Yet no sooner did they come forth from their den of avarice and ambition, than the world was required to bow before the man, whom the most successful politician had imposed on the others, *as without interruption*, the successor of St. Peter!—Such facts speak for themselves; lest, however, in this hasty sketch we should be thought to omit what is most important, we add,

THAT THE NUMEROUS USURPATIONS AND RIVALRIES OF THE POPES, HAVE INTERRUPTED THEIR APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

If the pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church were well founded, we should always see the reigning Pontiff revered by his Clergy, and continuing in the peaceful discharge of his duty till death naturally terminated his career. As the earthly representative of the Almighty, we could not expect his destined successor to raise against him the arm of rebellion, and to obtain the awful distinction for himself by Russian usurpation. Yet the Popes of Rome frequently enjoyed their elevation as the reward of the exile,—imprisonment,—or murder of their predecessors. No History is stained more

† Thus after the death of Clement IV. there was no Pope for nearly three years. After the death of John XXI. the See was vacant for six months; and at the death of Nicholas IV. there was another vacancy for two years. When Clement V. died, their Eminences could not determine whether to have an Italian or French Bishop, and therefore, left the Church without a Head for two years again! Such is the “due and unbroken succession,” of the real nature of which Cobbett most likely was ignorant.

deeply with the crimes of a ruthless ambition than theirs—No disputed throne—no hereditary quarrel of the dark ages—no feudal horrors, when every petty Baron was plotting his neighbour's destruction,—give to History such disgusting materials as they furnish: "*Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations—O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united.*" We behold men labouring for years to supplant others, by stratagems and crimes, which in the pride of success, they have not hesitated to avow. We see not merely the opposition of two or three men, but the Church, through all its gradations of Cardinals, Bishops, and Priests divided, and arranged under hostile banners. The schism occasioned by one Pope at Rome, and another at Avignon, will always remain a disgrace to the Popedom, and a refutation of its claims. A Papist may reply, that amidst all pretenders there might always have been one genuine successor of St. Peter—but we defy him to prove which of two rivals is in this sense to be preferred,—Urban VI. whom the Romans obliged the Cardinals to elect, or the Count of Geneva, whom these Cardinals opposed to Urban with the title of Clement VII. Besides, after a long and violent contest, the healing of divisions was frequently attempted by pronouncing two Popes unworthy, and electing a third, which amounted to a declaration, that during these rival Pontificates the Church had really been without a head; for upon what principle can the Church justify the deposition of any Pontiff, without a retrospective censure destroying his infallibility and right to dominion? Now we think we may return to the point from whence we set out, and reject with indignation every argument for Popery, founded on a succession, *secular, vicious, sacreligious, and mutilated*; and in concluding, call the attention of our readers to the infamous manner in which Cobbett has managed the introduction to his History, or fable of the English Reformation.

We have already hinted at his disingenuousness, and the suspicion of hostility to real religion under every name, which

we have pretty plainly exhibited in his attack on Protestantism, without the possession of the faith or submission of a Roman Catholic. The infidel poison of his production consists in the insinuations by which he aims to reduce Christianity to Popery, assured, that if he can hang about the former the trappings of the latter—if he can make Religion accountable for the abuses of unprincipled men—he may sink it into contempt, and succeed in emancipating the world from every obligation to Heaven. Some men have become Papists for the purpose of having an accommodating Religion, but this Renegade seems to describe Popery as essentially and exclusively the Christian Religion, that he may enjoy the high privilege of Infidelity, and have the liberty of despising all which has survived his desolating hand. If we were not rendered serious by the thinly shrouded malignity with which he writes, we could be amused at the tender concern for humanity and for the honour of Religion, with which the awful consequences of denying the divine origin of Popery appear to inspire him. For instance, we are entertained with a most affecting and melting appeal to the respect we owe for those of our ancestors who built our Churches, and were buried in our Church-yard; † as if we were called to pronounce their condemnation without allowing the possibility of a single exception; a course of conduct which this Historian ought to know is not sanctioned by any Protestant principle, though in a change of situation, it is the necessary result of what has frequently been avowed as one fundamental principle of Popery. Taking for granted the point in dispute—he pretends to think it impossible that if our faith be divine, the Roman Catholic Church should always and universally have prevailed, and

† "Will they tell us that all our fathers who first built our Churches, and whose flesh and bones form the earth for many feet deep in all the church yards; will they tell us, that all these are now howling in the regions of the damned? Nature beats at our bosom, and bids us shudder at the impious, the horrid thought," &c.---Let. 1. § 19.

gravely asks, if we will dare to tell him that Christ gave up the world wholly to "Antichrist" for twelve hundred years. "Yet this (he adds) they must do; they must stand forward with bold and unblinking blasphemy; or they must confess themselves guilty of the most atrocious calumny against the Catholic Religion." Let. I. § 10. This is as much as to say, that to maintain the truth of Protestantism we must confess the truth of Popery, for his conclusion rests on the presumption of an acknowledgment we never will make—a mode of argument this, which although he has taken the trouble to invent for our use, we do not feel ourselves reduced to the necessity of employing. He forgets that Protestantism is only one modification of that simplicity in Religion which always existed—which was the original Institution of Christ—though in the Religious establishments of Christendom it was gradually obscured by the impositions of abandoned Popes and litigious Councils. But who can fail to observe in Cobbett's pathetic strain, one of the common subterfuges of Deism—the same artifice as has been successfully employed by HUME and GRASSON—though in the hands of such a man, whose grossness of mind and style stands opposed to the refinement and elegance of these writers, it becomes the most open to detection. The Romish Religion did not always exist—during its baleful prosperity, piety retired from its abominations, and flourished in retirement—and Christ in its present subjugation, is vindicating the honour of his Gospel, and pouring that light upon the world, at the effulgence of which, such men as the writer of the work before us, are anxious to fall back into the profoundest gloom of former ages. Cobbett's pretended concern for the honour of Christ, in his defence of Popery, reminds us of Milton's account of Satan's address to the Sun:—

To thee, I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun, TO TELL THEM HOW I HATE THY BEAMS.‡

Another view of the design of the writer may be obtained from the manner in which he speaks of the authority of the New

‡ Paradise Lost. B. 4. 26.

Testament. Charging inconsistency upon the Church of England for separating from Rome, he asks, "How did we come by this New Testament? If this be the book, and the only book which contains instructions relative to the means of saving our souls, it is manifest, that it is a matter of deep interest to us, *who it was* that this book came from to us, through *what channel* we received it, and *what proof* we have of its authenticity?" (Let. 1. § 16.)—In answer to these questions, we are referred to a Council four hundred years after Christ, and we are told, that "for the authenticity of the New Testament, we have no voucher other than the *Scarlet Where*, and that Church, whose worship is *idoltrous*, and whose doctrines are *damnable*." (Let. 1. § 18, 19.)—We can easily conceive of the triumph with which the enemies of Revelation will join in this conclusion, and most honestly confess our unqualified abhorrence of such attempts to degrade the authority of the Sacred Volume, to a level with the decisions of fallible men. Our detestation of this design, is only equalled by our contempt of the unfairness with which its fulfilment is planned.—It is not the decision of any Council that makes the authority of the New Testament binding upon us, and the proof of its authenticity is essentially distinct from every thing they chose to decree. We know that the books we receive as sacred were received without debate—were read and expounded in public as Divine—and were appealed to in all doubtful cases as infallible guides of faith, in countries and at a period which must have secured their rejection if they had been false. To say that the only proof of their authenticity is the decision of a Council in the fourth or fifth Century, and to say this when, as in the present case, the appointments of such Councils are not observed, is obviously to evade the evidence of a Divine Revelation, and abandon us to that uncertainty which so many prefer to the obligations of Religion. So decided is Cobbett's Infidelity!

THE PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. IV.

SATURDAY, JULY 16.

THE antiquity of any Church, and the right of that Church to undiminished authority for ever, are subjects essentially distinct in their nature, and each requiring a different order of evidence. The one is a fact to be supported by the usual historical documents, while the other involves a doctrine in Religion to be confirmed by an appeal to the Scriptures, or by the establishment of a second supreme judge in the performance of modern miracles. Yet the advocates of the Romish Church often seem to confound what in these respects ought always to be distinguished, and after supposing that their antiquity is enough to establish their infallibility, presume on this antiquity in contempt of the real facts of history. This is instanced by Cobbett with his usual extravagance in his account of the English Reformation. "Our ancestors (he says) became Christians about six hundred years after the death of Christ. And *how* did they become Christians? *Who* first pronounced the name of Christ to this land? *Who* converted the English from *Paganism* to Christianity? Some Protestant Saint doubtless, warm from a victory like that of Skibbereen? Oh, no! The work was begun, continued, and ended by the Pope, one of whom sent over some *Monks*, (of

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whom we shall see more by and by) who settled at Canterbury, and from whose beginnings, the Christian Religion spread, like the grain of mustard-seed, rapidly over the land. What-ever, therefore, any other part of the world might have known of Christianity before the Pope became the settled and acknowledged head of the Church, *England*; at any rate never had known of any Christian Religion other than that at the head of which was the Pope; and in this Religion, with the Pope at its head, England continued to be firmly fixed for *nine hundred years*." (Let. 1. § 11).—This, indeed, is pointed, is confident, but is also *FALSE*. The date of Christianity in Britain is so remote, that there is reason to identify it with the Apostolic age. Passing by the legend of Joseph of Arimathea, and leaving the alleged visit of the Apostle Paul to our Island in uncertainty, we have the testimony of the most early and respectable Christian writers, to the antiquity of our Religion. Tertullian, Origen, Arnobius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Eusebius, all mention Britain by name, as visited by the Gospel at an early period. Add to this, Gildas, who lived in the 6th Century, himself a Briton, has left behind him the record of what was commonly received in his day, viz. that the Gospel was propagated in our land about the time of the revolt of Boadicea, which event took place A.D. 61.*—Whether Paul visited Britain or not, we know that during his imprisonment at Rome, he was active in disseminating Religious knowledge. Under these circumstances, it is probable that the British Captives, who were carried to Rome with Caractacus, were instructed by Paul in the Christian faith; and that thus, Brennus, who was detained in that city as the father of Caractacus, was prepared to instruct his countrymen at home.† This is favoured by the British Triads, in:

* *Usserii Brit. Eccles. Antiquitates*. Stillington's *Origines Britannicæ*.
 Bp. Burgess's *Treatise of the Ancient British Church*.

† That Paul had intercourse with British Christians has been conjectured from the case of POMPONIA GRACINA, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the first

which explicit mention is made of Brennus or Brân, as an important and successful agent in this great work.† The Christianity of Lucius in the 2nd Century, is recorded by Bede; and of the success of this Prince, the most splendid tales have been written by others. The history of the Diocletian Persecution—the Council of Arles—the spread of Pelagianism—all afford the most legible traces of Christianity in our native land long before the mission of Austin. A learned Prelate of the present day, has numbered seven epochs of the ancient British Church, giving it a form and substance without the labours of the Romish Monks.

1. St. Paul's preaching in Britain in the *first* Century.
2. Lucius's protection of Christianity in the *second*.
3. The Diocletian Persecution, which in the beginning of the fourth Century martyred the British Saints, who were Christians of the Church in the *third* Century.
4. The Council of Arles, at which were present several British Bishops in the *fourth* Century.
5. The Synod of Verulam, in the *fifth* Century.
6. The Synod of Elanddewi Brefi, in the *sixth* Century.
7. The rejection of the Pope's authority by the British Bishops in the *seventh* Century.

596, Austin landed in Kent, prevailed on Ethelbert to profess Christianity and afford him his sanction; though Bertha the Queen, let it be observed, was previously a Christian, and had always had her own Religious establishment. This holy

Governor of Britain. This lady, is mentioned by Tacitus, and comparing the date, of her trial at Rome, for embracing "a foreign superstition," with the imprisonment of Paul, Stillington was led to consider her one of the Apostle's Converts. Goodwin and Usher have ascribed to the story taken off Ptolemy and Orobastus, in the second Epistle to Tim. 4. 21, compared with Martial, who speaks of a Claudia that was married to Pudens, and describes her as a British Lady. Tacit. Annal. lib. 15, § 32. Martial, lib. xi. Ep. 55. Lib. 4. Ep. 15.

† See Rusher's *History Britannica*, Vol. 2. p. 21.

† See the Protestant's Catechism, by Ep. Burgess.

and devoted Monk soon proved that his zeal to convert Pagans was mingled with an ambition to convert the ancient British Clergy from their independence. He summoned a Synod, at which he required them to conform to the ceremonies of the Church of Rome, from which they differed in several things, especially on that cardinal point, the time for celebrating Easter! This may appear to our readers a trifling difference, but such was the importance attached to it in that age, that it gave rise to the most violent dissensions, and required for its maintenance the greatest independence of principle. This Synod was followed by another at which seven British Bishops were present, who boldly and unanimously refused the conformity required, and told the arrogant Monk to his face, that they would not make him their Archbishop. Thus it appears Christianity was not only introduced before the Popedom existed, but that at the period when Gregory sent his emissaries hither, they were despised as the slaves of a foreign hierarchy, and doomed, in the fervour of British zeal for Christian liberty, to the same indignant treatment as might have been expected by "a settler-forth of

§ Giraldus Cambrensis. "But above all others," (says Usher) the British Priests that dwelt in West Wales abhorred the communion of these dogmatists above all measure; as ADHELM Abbots of MALMSBURY, declareth at large, in his epistle sent to GERUNTUS KING OF CORNWALL, where among many other particulars he sheweth that if any of the CATHOLICKS (for so he called those of his own side) did go to dwell among them, THEY WOULD NOT VOUCHSAFE TO ADMIT THEM INTO THEIR COMPANY AND SOCIETY, BEFORE THEY FIRST PUT THEM TO FORTY DAYS PENANCE,--YEA, EVEN TO THIS DAY (saith Bede who wrote his History in the year 731) IT IS THE MANNER OF THE BRITAINS TO HOLD THE FAITH AND THE RELIGION OF THE ENGLISH IN NO ACCOUNT AT ALL, NOR TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM IN ANY THING MORE THAN WITH PAGANS. Whereunto those verses of TALIESYN (honoured by the Britains with the title of BEN BEIRDE, that is the Chief of the BARD or WISE MEN) may be added: (which shows that he wrote after the coming of AUGUSTIN into England, and not fifty, or sixty years before, as others have imagined)

We be to him that doth not keep
From ROMISH wolves, his sheep.
With staff and weapon strong."

Usher's Discourse of the Religion of the Ancient Irish & British, 1697. p. 68.

strange Gods." Supposing the reverence for our ancestors a feeling of any value in this controversy, what must we think of those shameless advocates of Popery, among whom the non-descript Cobbett has taken his stand, who addressing themselves to this reverence, throw the darkness of their impostures over the past, and misrepresent the characters they invite us to imitate? Instead of clinging to Popery as the most ancient Religion of our fathers, we are only acting in their spirit, and treading in their steps, whom we despise and renounce it. And when we discover the cheat which is attempted to be put upon us, in being called to follow the Anglo-Saxon converts of Austin amidst the superstitions of Rome, to the neglect of those British Christians whom these Saxons and this Austin opposed in their attempts to preserve their own authority and customs; the generous ardour of men who feel the love of country and ancestry is roused into indignation, and if we moderate our censure on the Romish Missionaries in the hope that they were useful in some respects, we feel disgusted with the man who lands them as the source of all the Christianity which originally shone on our land. No fact is better authenticated than this, that when Austin attempted to establish the authority of the Bishop of Rome in Britain, he had the Christianity of centuries to contend with. It will appear surprising to some of our readers that Cobbett should omit to notice these things, and they will perhaps be led to suppose that he could be, in no degree, aware of their existence. Ignorance, however, cannot be allowed him here, as an excuse for falsehood; for after speaking of our ingratitude to the Catholic Church in his second letter, he adds:—
 "It is supposed by some, and, indeed, with good authorities on their side, that the Christian Religion was partially introduced into England so early as the second Century after Christ. But we know for a certainty, that it was introduced effectually in 596, that is to say 923 years before Henry VIII. began to destroy it" (Let. 2. § 44.). Here Cobbett allows us

to have good authorities, for flatly contradicting his statements, and yet without a single authority on his side, persists in repeating them (See Paragraph 46). Recollect he had formerly said that our conversion from Paganism had been "begun, continued, and ended by the Popes;" and fixing the commencement of this, six hundred years after the death of Christ, he denies the possibility of England ever having known any other Religion than that at the head of which the Pope was by this time placed. ¶ Yet here, in his second letter, and consequently at another sitting, when the maddening excitement of his first composition had a little subsided, he gives us credit for good authorities in carrying the date of Christianity four hundred years farther back. He then proceeds to speak of ours as a partial; and the other as an effectual introduction; a distinction which as hypothetical is easily understood, but the historical fatality of which is equal to the incoherency with which he writes. The introduction of Religion by Austin was partial in the same sense in which the preaching of earlier Missionaries was so, and even the triumph of Religion in our day, can never be said to be effectual in the sense of opposition to partial, as long as such a scribe as this can succeed in publishing himself for an oracle. It is perfectly ludicrous to find Cobbett at our next step, pondering devoutly over the *Calendar of Saints*; and with all the gravity of a man who is called to decide on matters of eternal interest, striving to determine the precise events which distinguished the days against which the names of Gregory and Austin are posted. See him turning over *Lives, Legends, and Histories*—massy folios without number—and with all the anxiety of one who expects to be saved by a scrupulous division of the respect to be paid these Saints, balancing the probabilities belonging to the different events which were to render their days in the calendar illustrious—and after much profound

study, and black-letter research, arriving at the weighty conclusion, that on the one day the Pope might have given his order to Austin, and on the other Austin landed in Kent; or "perhaps these may be the days of the year on which these great benefactors of England were born!" If we could participate in the seriousness with which Cobbett seems to write,—if we were not moved to laughter by the very contemptible figure he makes—we might piteously exclaim, But how awful the uncertainty in which all this leaves us! Now what shall we say to the man,—or rather, what shall we say of him, for who can stoop to personal altercation with such a recusant?—what shall we say of the man who admits what he denies, and then denies what he admitted; who allows you to have good authority for one statement, but still insists on another? Can he expect his readers to prove so easy of deception that they will believe him on account of his confidence, where he does not pretend to any evidence? Can he imagine that they will take his unsupported assertions for truth; and put down the concessions which truth has wrung from him, to an excess of candour? Or are we in some future number to be told, that he does not mean what he affirms, and that what we are exposing is merely a concession for the purpose of getting rid of a pretence of which no one is dreaming? But we are weary of tracking his windings. Every subterfuge the most inventive ingenuity can imagine, only multiplies his absurdities and adds to his shame. We must leave this *Edipus* to the decision he has purchased on this head, till he can prove that what was partial never existed, and that what took place in the second Century, had its "beginnings;" (to use his own elegant phrase), in the sixth!

Here it is also worthy of inquiry, how far Paganism has ever been established in England. What reason is there for affirming that the rejection of its claims originated with Henry VIII.? Cobbett teaches us that from the first proclamation of Christ on our shores down to the year 1519, there was no

Religion but that which had the Pope for its head, and that this Papal supremacy was "*firmly fixed*" among us for nine hundred years. Now scarcely any thing is more obvious in the annals of English History than the contrary. Papal supremacy was never firmly fixed in our land—has almost always been opposed as inconsistent with the genius of our Government—and from the time of Edward I. has been proscribed by our laws, and its adherents exposed to the penalties of vindictive justice; so that instead of opposition to Rome originating with Henry VIII. the way to independence had been opened by the Princes and Parliaments of former ages. From the time of Austin, undoubtedly, the claims of the Romish Church became notorious, and among many Bishops and the uninstructed crowd which followed them, were regarded with reverence; but every one is acquainted with the frequent disputes which were occasioned by the attempts of Churchmen to exempt themselves from all obligation to a civil tribunal, and with the unsettled state in which their privileges were always found.—Though the successors of Austin may be allowed to have defended the jurisdiction of the Pope, it never entered into the spirit of our political constitution, and was never legally recognised as supreme. The first time it appeared in any commanding form, any way corresponding with the majesty of its pretensions, was at the Norman Conquest, in the eleventh Century. The Duke of Normandy sought the sanction of the Pope for his invasion of England, and the Pontiff cheerfully blessed his army and consecrated his banners; and though William afterwards manfully resisted the encroachments of Hildebrand, he gave the See of Rome an opportunity to interfere with the affairs of his kingdom. All the events of his reign manifested his deep anxiety to depress the English and elevate the Normans; and in a short time, Earldoms and Baronies, Bishoprics and Abbacies, distributed among his Norman dependants, trained to the meanest subservience.

abroad, were brought more than ever, under the domination of Papal authority.* Thus we perceive, that the most remarkable events which contributed to the growth of Roman Catholicism in England, were distinguished by political usurpation, and national degradation; and Popery, instead of being the inheritance of Englishman, was given them in cruel and insulting exchange for their birthrights and liberties. But notwithstanding this, the Constitutions of Clarendon, were voted in, an Assembly of the British Nobility and Prelates under Henry II., by which he gave a check to the power of the Pope and his Ministers.† They also afford one proof of the early existence of the spirit of Reformation, and will serve to illustrate the contention which in some degree was always preserved between the laws of England, and the laws of Rome. Opposition, however, to Papal dominion, and the exorbitant claims of the Romish Clergy, became more obvious and successful under the government of Edward I. In mentioning his reign, our attention is called to the statutes of Praemunientes, which term relates to the encouragement given, under certain circumstances, to the Papal claims, and which long before Henry VIII. existed, was a crime at law. This Monarch, styled the "English Justinian," carried his opposition to the Pope's authority so far, that when one of his subjects procured a bull of excommunication against another, he ordered him to be executed as a traitor according to the ancient law. Notwithstanding the weakness of Edward II., his Parliament continued uncompromising, and his disposition to bow to Rome was considered one of his greatest faults. Edward III. in answer to an insolent message from the Pope, declared his readiness to meet the Emperor and the French King on the field of battle, rather than surrender his independence; and when Urban V. demanded of him the vassalage

* Eadmer, in Collier's Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. p. 230.

† Rapin's Hist. Henry II.

which the pusillanimous John had promised, he and his Parliament nullified the ignominious grant of John, as void of Parliamentary sanction, and contrary to his coronation oath. In the reign of Richard II. several additional laws were enacted, among which the acceptance of a living by any foreign provision was prohibited under severe penalties, as well as the importation of any citation, or excommunication on account of the execution of such statutes. Beside this we may observe, that when Martin V. in the reign of Henry VI. required the Archbishop of Canterbury to seek a repeal of what he called the "execrable" statute of Præmunire, the Archbishop refused, and being openly supported by the University of Oxford, the Nobility, and the Bishops, the statute remained.† There is another singular fact connected with the history of these periods, which ought not to be passed over in silence. So strong was the feeling of the nation against Papal supremacy, that Parliamentary sanction could not be obtained for those measures, which the Clergy pretended to think essential to the interests of the Church. The most important penal statutes, therefore, in our country, in favour of Popery, were *fictitious*! The pretended law for coercive measures in the worship of images, 5th Richard II.—for the imprisonment and burning of heretics, 2nd Henry IV.—and for obliging the officers of Government to assist the ordinaries in *extirpating* heresies, 2nd Henry V.—are shown by Sir Edward Coke to have wanted the sanction of Parliament, and to have been nothing more than Orders in Council, though fraudulently dated "at the Parliament."‡ These remarks will serve to prove, that the progress of Popery in England before the sixteenth Century, was far different from that placid and equable course which many Papists describe, till, according to them, the turbulent

† Beside the Historians of England on the above reigns, see Blackstone's Commentaries, B. 4, c. 8.

‡ See Mr. G. Sharp's Remarks on the Irish Roman Catholic Catechism, Pref. and App.

passions of Henry VIII. changed the scene. With the facts we have mentioned before us, our readers must be surprised that Cobbett, in a bold and flippant style, should pass from Austin to Henry, as if in this wide interval no enemy had stirred, and not a single syllable of dissatisfaction been whispered. The elements of hostility had been gathering for ages, and Henry, whose opposition to Rome must have been futile had nothing of the kind existed before, merely deposed an authority, the foundations of which had been previously shaken.

There is now another view to be taken of the Roman Catholic Religion in England, previous to the period usually styled the Reformation, and that relates not to its political power, but to the credit of its superstitions and dogmas with the people at large. It is, as we shall afterwards have occasion to notice, in a change of the Religious opinions and customs of the multitude, that the Reformation must most carefully be traced, if we would arrive at accurate information on this important subject; and to this, in the *fourteenth* Century, we invite the attention of the reader for a few moments. At this time, the "morning star" of our Protestant Religion shone brightly on our horizon. JOHN WICKLIFFE, described by his contemporaries as a man of extraordinary genius and learning, publicly inveighed against the corruptions of the Romish Church, with the keenest severity, and most unexpected success. From the Pulpit, and from the Divinity Chair of Oxford, he boldly published his censures, and had the satisfaction of beholding their effect in the triumph of the friends of primitive Christianity, and the confusion of their adversaries; the venal Clergy were enraged,—the Pope sent forth his bulls,—but both the people and the Court had felt the irresistible force of his appeals to Scripture and to fact. When summoned by the Archbishop and others, he appeared in their Court under the powerful protection of the King's son, and the Earl Marshall; and when he attended to the call of his

enemies a second time, the Citizens of London went in his train, and his disappointed judges were afraid to pronounce any sentence against him: yea, when the decrees which condemned his doctrines were sent to the University of Oxford for publication, the defender of this Reformer was heard with approbation, and his enemy obliged to desist from the unpopular attempt to publish the authorised censure of his tenets. He persevered in his work of Reformation till death put an end to his career, 1384; and nothing more is necessary to show the impotency of Popery at this period, than the fact, that Wickliffe died a natural death, notwithstanding the rage of that enmity which had sought his destruction, more than the ruin of any other man in the kingdom. And it will not be uninteresting also, to recollect the construction which his enemies put upon his death,|| and the malignity and diabolical rancour of those feelings, in the frenzy of which, at the expiration of nearly half a century, the remains of this great man were disinterred, burned, and their ashes thrown into a river! But the effects of his labours were never destroyed: many of the English Nobility were decided friends of his doctrine, and in the reign of Henry IV. the majority of the House of Commons presented two petitions to the King, complaining of the Clergy, and requesting indulgence towards the disciples of Wickliffe, who were then persecuted under the name of Lollards. The alarm manifested by the Bishops at the increase of these friends of Reformation, plainly prove that their number must have been great, and their influence extensive; in confirmation of this, the words of Spelman have

|| "On the day of St. Thomas the Martyr, Archbishop of Canterbury, (says Walsingham, a contemporary historian) that liab: of the devil, enemy of the Church, deceiver of the people, idol of heretics, mirror of hypocrites, author of schism, sower of hatred, and inventor of lies, John Wickliffe, was BY THE IMMEDIATE JUDGEMENT OF GOD, suddenly struck with a palsy, which seized all the members of his body, when he was ready, as they say, to vomit forth his blasphemies against the blessed St. Thomas, in a sermon which he had prepared to preach that day."

often been quoted, that two men could not be found in company, but one of them was a Lollard ¶

Though Cobbett has not entertained us with a fable for Ireland, by which we might learn that there was no Religion there till some drudge of Rome was commissioned to proclaim Papal supremacy on its shores, he includes this country in his general remarks—puts its name in the blazonry of his title page,—and gives its Roman Catholic population the full benefit of his calumnies, comprizing them, we suppose, with his uniform accuracy, in the aggregate of “sensible and just *Englishmen*,” to whom his letters are addressed! It may, therefore, be necessary to look for a moment at the History of Papal authority in that unhappy country, where the deluded multitude are taught that we are anxious to rob them of their patrimony, and their all.

Though Palladius and Patrick visited Ireland in the 6th Century, the Irish Churches maintained their independence at the time of Austin, as appears from the account which Bede has given of Austin's proposal for a union. And though Ireland was emphatically styled “the Island of Saints,” none of its worthies received canonization from Rome till a comparatively recent period. Add to which it was long a complaint with the advocates of Rome, that Bishops and Archbishops were constituted without any reference to the Pope. Nor have we any account of Romish Visitations, Indulgencies, or Legatine appointments, till the 12th Century.*

Here let the Irish Catholics, who are lamenting their dependence on an English Government, look well to this period of their History, and learn, that they might never have been in alliance with Rome, if they had not first been insulted as heathens—disgraced as men—and delivered by one, who had:

¶ See Henry's Great Britain, vol. 8. Biographia Britannica Art. Wickliffe. Giffert's Eccles. Hist. Vol. 1. 564, &c: Fox's Martyrdom E. 3. 8. 2.

** Usher's Discourse; &c. c. 8 and 11.

no authority among them, to another who sought some pre-
 tence at his hands, to carry the desolation of war into their
 homes. Pope Adrian IV. was an Englishman, and Henry II.
 determined to embrace every advantage which the elevation
 of a fellow-countryman to the Pontificate was likely to afford
 him. He sent a formal embassy to Rome, soliciting the sanc-
 tion of his Holiness for an invasion—an hostile invasion of
 Ireland! Adrian, flattered by the recognition of temporal
 dominion which the application implied, and perfectly ready
 to accept any revenue which Henry was foolish enough to
 purchase for him at the price of blood, acceded to this unreason-
 able request, and sent the Monarch the Bull he wanted. In
 this monstrous consignment of Ireland to the lawless ambition
 of an English Prince, we cannot fail to be disgusted with the
 manner in which a disposing right is assumed without the
 slightest foundation, as well as with the characteristic venality
 of the Pope, by which a revenue is demanded from the con-
 quered people. “You have informed us,”—thus his Holiness
 wrote to Henry—“You have informed us, dear son, of your
 “ design of an expedition into Ireland to subdue the people
 “ to obedience, to extirpate vice, and also to pay out of every
 “ house an annual pension of one penny to St. Peter, and to
 “ preserve the laws of the Churches of that land inviolate
 “ and entire. We, therefore, approving of your pious and
 “ laudable design, and granting you our cheerful assent,
 “ regard it as gratifying to ourselves, that you should go to
 “ that island for the purpose of enlarging the boundaries of
 “ the Church, staying the progress of vice, correcting the man-
 “ ners of the people, planting virtue among them, increasing
 “ their Christianity, (*pro Christianæ Religionis augmento*),
 “ and performing whatever may promote the honour of God,
 “ and the salvation of the country. May the people receive
 “ you with respect, and revere you as their governor, *pro-*
 “ *vided that you preserve the right of the Churches inviolate*
 “ *and entire, and the annual pension to St. Peter be duly*

“paid.”††—Apart from the mean avarice which this Bull so plainly betrays, it gives us the authority of the Pope for saying, that before this time, Ireland was not a stranger to Christianity, and at the same time was not subject to Rome. This conduct of Adrian furnished an excuse for any scene of cruelty and blood; but since it was nothing to the independent Irish, Henry was obliged to wait for some favourable opportunity, when amidst intestine commotions he might attempt his projected conquest. Such an opportunity was soon afforded. Ireland was divided into several Principalities, among which was Leinster, governed by Dermot Macmorrogh, whose tyranny and licentiousness procured his expulsion from his throne. He fled to Henry, and solicited the aid of this Monarch against his country. Aid was granted, Ireland was subjected to England, and under these instructive circumstances, became, for the first time, a Roman Catholic country!‡ — We do not repeat the record of these events for the purpose of inflaming national prejudices, but to show that every fair reference to the Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, and the origin of Popery in that country, leaves the guilt of former ages unatoned for, and must expose, some at least, of the advocates of the Romish Church to the charge of daily deception. Neither do we aim to make the present Catholic Priesthood of Ireland accountable for the criminality of those measures by which the way was prepared for their authority; but we maintain, that so long as they rest their claims on the history of the Irish Church, they remain loaded with a weight, which requires all the supports of superstition, to prevent from sinking them into infamy or oblivion. If they persist in declaiming against Protestantism as an innovation, and an encroachment on the ancient privileges of their countrymen, they must permit, or despite of their opposition, must have the mortification to see us lift the veil of ignorance, and point, in the

†† Translations of this Bull may be found in Rapin's Hist. Lyttleton's Hen. II. Collier's Eccles. Hist. Bp. Burgess's Protestant's Catechism.

‡ Leland's Hist. of Ireland, vol. I. c. 1.

back ground of their History, to the achievements of Popery, as itself an innovation, and a tyrannical encroachment on the liberty, both Civil and Religious, of their forefathers. It cannot have failed to escape the observation of many of our readers, that certain Priests and Orators of Ireland, seem to regard their Country as a land which has always been sacred to Rome,—as in the fables of heathenism, Cythera and Cyprus, for instance, were consecrated to Venus—and that for a Protestant to Preach, erect a School, or publish a Bible, is like breaking through the defences of another man's estate, and despoiling his property. They appear to think that Protestantism is a national Revolution, and that it has an existence only in an inversion of all order, and contempt of all law. So that if truth and equity were ever to resume their sway, if a distribution of right were to take place, and the iron grasp of oppression be shaken—Protestantism, like the demon of discord, would wing her flight—the throne would be filled with righteousness—the altar blaze with devotion—and the Millennium of Popery commence! Roman Catholics would feel like the plundered poor, who have at length obtained justice in an uncorrupted court; and Protestants be doomed to the mortification of cheats constrained to forego their unlawful possessions. But there is delusion in all this—the blindness of exasperated feelings—for thinking what Ireland was, what she might have been, what she ought to be, and may soon become, we are obliged to pity her as the victim of tyranny under the name of Religion—a tyranny not the less pitiable because it has been so long laboriously disguised, that her ancestry runs through a long line of slaves. The Romish Religion of Irishmen was the yoke of an arbitrary tyrant, and in its present disjunct state, is the worst effect which remains of their ancient bondage. And never will they resemble their ancestors, at that time when their country won the proud appellation of "*The Island of Saints*," till they publish to the world their separation from Rome.

THE PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. V.

SATURDAY, JULY 30.

HENRY VIII. deserves no apologist. Tyranny, domestic, civil, and Religious, gives its dark and malignant features to his character, and merits as much execration from Protestants as it has gained from Papists. But while the events of this Monarch's reign led the way to the Reformation on a firm and broad basis, his vices involve no principle of Protestantism, either as a source or sanction. Since, however, he was instrumental in effecting a great change in the Religion of our Country, the enemies of this change have endeavoured to load the holiest of causes with the weight of his crimes, and to sink the character of its advocates in the infamy of despotism and sensuality.

It has long been received as a maxim, that the corruptions of the best things are the worst, and it is equally true, that the best things are most liable to be corrupted by base and unprincipled men. The effort to escape from the condemnation of the good by pretending to an alliance with them, and the sanction which the perversion of virtue gives to vice, will always afford instances in which a holy and righteous cause has to sustain the imposition of crime and hypocrisy. Religion, in all its forms, must endure this inconvenience; its

principles will often be misunderstood, and its rules misapplied ; while even in other cases, a comprehensive conception of its nature, may only make imposture more subtle and triumphant. Truth has been misrepresented by the conduct of pretended friends, whose misrepresentations have furnished the weapons of warfare to her deadliest foes, till shocked at the abuses under which she has been disguised, many are tempted to turn from her in shame, and abandon her to defeat. If, however, we admit, as a general rule, the unprincipled conduct of men, to form an objection to certain principles which they hypocritically avow, we launch ourselves at once on the ocean of scepticism, without a compass or a star. For, look at the history of human opinions in every age of the world, and at every form of profession which Religion has assumed, Protestant or Popish ; and misrepresentations, per-
 versions, and abuses, meet us at every glance, repelling us from every point of observation, till nothing entirely free from objection, is left us to admire. But there are at least two considerations, which we ought always to take with us in reflections of this nature: The principles, which in some instances have been made to subserve base designs, have in a greater number, where they have been conscientiously acted upon, proved the source of human order and happiness. Beside which, it is enough for the cause of truth or Religion in any case, if we can establish an inconsistency between the principle avowed and the conduct adopted. Then, however bad the conduct in dispute, it leaves the alleged principle unexceptionable, and placing guilt on the man, augments its weight in proportion to the excellence abused. When discussing the characters of men who have been prominent in Religious revolutions, the Protestant possesses an obvious advantage over the Papist. He confers no supreme authority on men who have erred,—he does not hold his faith in dependence upon a turbulent politician, who makes the doctrines he recommends to others instrumental in the fulfilment of his own secular projects,—but

his faith is to him the same as though it had never been professed by another; it stands "not in the wisdom of men," nor in their follies and crimes, but solely on the ground of divine injunction; and in a personal reception of its immortal benefits. It matters therefore, comparatively little, whether the tenets he supports have been professed by wicked men or not, for the circumstances of their profession may afford aid to designs entirely foreign to their nature; it is to these tenets themselves that he invites attention, in their accordance with the rule of faith, and their legitimate tendency in the lives of the simple and sincere. Now, let the Papist attempt to stand forward in this unembarrassed and independent form, and he will soon discover the disadvantage to be great under which that system places him, which if it had not its origin in vice, finds its authority in the vicious. Prove the irreligion and vices of the Popes, and the foundation of the Romish Religion is subverted, but exaggerate all that is exceptionable in the characters of Henry and Elizabeth, and let the most violent exaggeration pass for unadorned truth, and the foundation of Protestantism stands in the dictates of inspiration, and the right of private judgment.

Events of the greatest importance to the happiness of man have often been produced by the instrumentality of those who have cherished no benevolent design, but were hostile to the good they effected. To refer all this to the wisdom of divine Providence, and in selecting the History of the English Reformation as an illustration of the fact, to find in the activity of Henry VIII. motives to the pious emotions of humility and gratitude, may perhaps expose us to the derision of the scorner, but will, we have no doubt, correspond with the habits of many of our readers. Henry never projected so great a change as he effected, and was decidedly hostile to that simplicity of worship and those doctrines of the Gospel, which after being defended by Luther on the continent, found an establishment in our own land. Amidst all the turbulence of his passions,

whether of lust or ambition, he was under the direction of an Almighty power to whom the glory of the Reformation is due, Those who acknowledge God in the ways of man, will consider the share of Henry in this great work, as the involuntary subjection of an enemy to the promotion of the cause he hated; and admire it as one instance of that facility in Providence, with which the Governor of the world obliges the haughtiest monarchs to serve the interests of his Church—Papists may make common cause with Infidels in deriding the Reformation, on account of the man who removed the political obstacles which stood in its way, but they must allow us to remind them, that in so doing, they fail to recognize the Providence of God, in those instances where it becomes most remarkable; and afford one illustration of the manner in which Popery is an oblivion of Christian sentiment and feeling. To offer these remarks to such a man as Cobbett, would be to address a feeling, there is too much reason to fear has long been extinguished in his bosom, and would be as fruitless as discourse to a deaf man on sounds, or to a blind man on colours. Yet we add, that in despising the principle on which such remarks proceed, he does more than renounce a distinctive principle of Protestantism, for he rushes into the dreariness of Atheism.

It is also of consequence to enquire how far Henry pressed the principles of the Reformation in his quarrel with the Pope, and whether or not his conduct did not exclusively regard certain political relations? In ascribing the Reformation to him, and making it accountable for his crimes, it is necessary to show that no disposition to a change previously existed among the people—that what marked the change in doctrine and practice was approved by him—and that his conduct instead of rising out of those circumstances, which apart from Protestantism, were a disgrace to the Roman See, proceeded upon a studied principle of rebellion against Papal rule. But this is incapable of the shadow of proof. We

have clearly shown that the nation was prepared for a change before the time of this Monarch, and we can show with equal ease that he was no more a Protestant than Edward I. that is, no farther than opposition to Papal encroachment on his prerogative was concerned; and that nothing but the treachery and duplicity of the Pope, in political intrigue, impelled him to the steps he took. The Reformation, in those respects which render it most valuable, was a restoration of Religion to the multitude, but as far as it was the work of Henry VIII. it was the denial of Papal supremacy in contradiction to his wishes; in which he proposed nothing more than the removal of a foreign yoke from his subjects, incompatible with their freedom in his service. The Religion of Rome had become an engine of State—a part of the political machinery of Europe—wrought in opposition to his wishes; and in breaking up this machinery, as far as his own people were concerned, he did nothing more than prepare the way for the Reformation, properly so called, a work, which in its length and its breadth, his prejudices and vices, as well as the fame of his contest with Luther, led him to disapprove.

The history of Henry's divorce from Catherine, presents us with a most disgusting scene of clerical and papal chicanery, itself a sufficient proof of the necessity for a separation from Rome. Here it may be necessary to remind the reader, that Catherine had been married to an elder brother of Henry, during the life of their father. Arthur the elder brother dying, Henry was united to his widow, receiving for a marriage so uncanonical, a dispensation from the Pope. Cobbett's statement of this case is shamefully defective, and is one strong instance of the effort he makes to bring history by mutilations and distortions, to answer his party purpose. He entirely omits to notice that a marriage so much within the prohibited relations, was likely to be regarded as criminal, and manifesting an impolitic contempt for religious prejudices, was likely in its consequences to involve the kingdom in confusion. He

omits to inform us that Henry VII. was dissatisfied with the marriage after it had taken place, and obliged his son, as soon as he came of age, to protest against it, and solemnly to declare his resolution, legally to annul it. He speaks also of the marriage with Arthur as never consummated, and repeats this as if it had never been denied, when he knew that every tittle of evidence belonging to the case, is in favour of its consummation, and that the contrary was never supported by any thing more than assertions no better than his own. He also forgets to state, that though a dispensation for the marriage was obtained from the Pope, it was at that time opposed by many cardinals and divines.* He evidently aims to disguise the case as an ordinary one, involving no difficulty, and to which no objection could be imagined, till the King's attachment to Ann Boleyn burst through all restrictions. A disguise, this, which can never succeed where any appeal is made to the authority of history, instead of resorting to the colouring of party.

"With this Lady (says Cobbett, speaking of Catherine) who was beautiful in her youth, and whose virtues of all sorts seems scarcely ever to have been exceeded, he (Henry) lived in the married state, *seventeen years*, before the end of which he had had three sons and two daughters by her, one of whom only, a daughter, was still alive, who afterwards was Mary Queen of England. But now, at the end of seventeen years, he being thirty-five years of age, and eight years younger than the Queen, and having cast his eyes on a young lady, an attendant on the Queen, named Ann Boleyn, he, all of a sudden, affected to believe that he was *living in sin*, because he was married to the *widow of his brother*, though as we have seen, the marriage between Catherine and the brother had never been consummated, and though the parents of both the parties, together with his own council, had unanimously and unhesitatingly approved of his marriage, which had moreover,

* Burnet's Reformation, vol. 1. p. 35, 36.

been sanctioned by the Pope, the head of the Church, of the faith and observances of which Henry himself had, as we shall hereafter see, been, long since his marriage, a zealous *defender* !” (Let. 2. § 62.)

With the beauty and virtues of Catherine we have nothing to do, but the *suddenness* of the King’s scruples and aversion, we deny, as flatly contradicted from every quarter. In the first place, we have already observed that his father, whether from religious prejudices or reasons of state is of no consequence, pressed upon him the necessity of dissolving the marriage, and we add, many of the nobility and clergy of England agreed with him, especially the Primate Warham. Neither is it surprising that scruples of the lawfulness of Henry’s marriage should have been cherished by himself and others. For when we recollect the superstition with which the rules of the Church were regarded in that age, and the explicit manner in which such a marriage as is now before us, was prohibited by the law of Moses, under the penalty of the curse of Heaven ; it required a greater portion of insincerity, or liberality of mind, than this Prince seems to have possessed, calmly to persevere in the face of opposition. Henry it should also be recollected was ambitious of the fame and accuracy of a scholastic divine, and with this ambition was a close student and warm admirer of Thomas Aquinas. This “ Angelic doctor” had written on the impiety of such a marriage as Henry’s, and since the monarch possessed a superstitious veneration for his authority, must have tended to divide and perplex his mind. It is not enough to reply that the marriage had been regularly and solemnly sanctioned by a papal dispensation, for many maintained, that the prohibition of Moses was of perpetual moral obligation, and could not be dispensed with by the highest authority in the Church ; and at the head of these casuists stood the King’s favorite oracle. Add to which in regard to foreign relations, and in the prospect of succession to the crown, these scruples were likely

to afford the materials of dispute, both at home and abroad. Yea, so powerful did objections of this nature become, when political calculations depended on religious perplexities, that they were urged by foreign powers before Henry manifested his own anxiety on the subject. A marriage was proposed between Mary, the daughter of Catherine, and the Dauphin or the Duke of Orleans; but the Bishop of Tarbe, the French Ambassador, objected the illegitimacy of Mary, on account of the illegality of the union of her parents.† And whether this objection was sincere, or is to be considered the result of political intrigue, is of little consequence; it proves that according to the prejudice of the age, great pretence did exist for dispute, and was, therefore, likely to occasion embarrassment either to a superstitious or politic mind. We notice these things, which are entirely neglected by Cobbett in the plenitude of his historical information, because, they prove that the train which ended in the Reformation, was laid long before any of its principles entered into the thoughts of the King and his Ministers; showing to the simplest understanding, that the divorce which is now charged on Protestantism, had its origin and supports amidst the scruples and cabals of decided Roman Catholics. This will appear still farther, if we recollect the influence which Cardinal Wolsey possessed over the King, and the probability there is, that this ambitious Churchman, if he did not first suggest his master's scruples, encouraged them on his own account. He had been disappointed of the Papacy, and in his disappointment, deceived as much as he had been flattered by the Emperor. His subtle spirit of intrigue, and desire of revenge, induced him to promote a difference between Henry and Charles, and to seek an alliance between the former and the French Monarch. For this, nothing promised better success than the divorce from Catherine, for

† Burnet, Vol. I. 37. Collier's Eccles. Hist. Vol. 2. p. 22.

she being about to the Emperor, was sent to engage him on her side, while her place might be supplied by a Princess of Brabant. Be this as it may, the Queen herself always considered him her worst enemy; and whether the business originated with him or not, he soon pledged his interest for its protection, though his activity furnished in his own discharge. But it was not Wolsey merely, first Duke of Albany, to whom the responsibility of this event belonged, before any man with the least predilections to Protestantism became an agent in the work; the whole Roman Catholic Episcopacy of England, with one exception, lent the King their assistance in the measures which it is the custom of Roman Catholics in the present day to condemn as infamous. Such was the purity of Popery once, and such is its consistency now! That he might not expose himself to the charge of rashly consulting his inclinations, or vainly confiding in the infallibility of his own decisions, Henry solicited the opinion of the Bishops, and soon after, the Archbishop presented him with a paper, pronouncing his marriage a violation of the laws of God; and which was duly signed and sealed by the mitred dignitaries of the Church, Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, alone, like another Abdiel, refusing his concurrence. After the Pope avowed the cause, the Universities, not only of England but of Europe, were required to give their decisions, when seven condemned the marriage, to which, among other auxiliaries, may be added the Doctors of the Sorbonne, whose reputation was unequalled, and sanction the most powerful. Now these, let it be observed, are Roman Catholic authorities, among which it would be difficult to select any who held the least antipathion of the detestation of Popery, or who would not have been ashamed at the imputation of contributing to the Reformation, as at that time excommunicated in Germany. We come now to Henry's treaty with the Pope, when he made his appeal to the gentleness and policy of this head of the Church. And here let us see how far the Pope's very complete list of the allies of the

To him, till Henry should marry another wife, according to his *private advice*, and then send to Rome for a Legate to confirm his conduct! Where now the Pope's love of justice, and indignation at the cruel treatment of a virtuous Queen? How could the credit of the Reformation be implicated in measures thus advised at the Court of Rome? But here is not the termination of this state labyrinth. Amidst a multiplicity of messages which constantly passed between Rome and England, it was urged upon Clement to appoint a second Legate in conjunction with Wolsey to try the cause, and to bind himself to confirm their decisions. At length Cardinal Campegius came with a Legatine Commission to England, and brought with him the desired Bull. The history of this Bull is a singular one, unfolding the meanest duplicity on the part of the Pope. Campegius exhibited it to Henry and Wolsey, but could not be prevailed on to place it for a moment in their hands, nor even to produce it before the Council. It was obviously employed as a mere play-thing, by which the King and his Minister were to be amused, and which was to be destroyed the first opportunity. Attempts were made to keep the Imperial faction in ignorance of the manner in which the Pope had complied with Henry's request. It could not, however, be concealed, that a process of divorce was preparing in England, and the Pope was, therefore, urged on the side of Germany, to avocate the cause to Rome, where the trial would proceed under the preponderating influence of the Emperor, and consequently prove favourable to the Queen. At this time, the Queen was advised by Campegius, in the Pope's name, to immure herself in the cloister for life. Such was the benevolence her misfortunes awakened at Rome! But she refused—the threats of the Emperor became alarming—and the prospect of freedom from dependance upon him distant. Under these circumstances, the Pope regretted the commission he had sent to England, and retracted the promise which it contained. But the messenger who was charged

with this retraction, was crossed by others from the King, with whom the Pope immediately resumed his dissimulation, and once more encouraged Henry by his promise of approval! Soon after this, the career of his Holiness seemed to have reached its termination, and Wolsey again aspired to the Papacy; but Clement recovered, and probably disgusted at Wolsey's conduct, manifested disaffection to Henry's cause. He received the protestation of the Emperor against the measures in agitation, and so far developed his treachery, as to oblige the King to recall his Ambassadors. The Emperor continued to press for the avocation of the cause to Rome, but the Pope long delayed in hope of improving the terms upon which this step was to be taken; at length the Legates commenced their investigation in England, and he found himself constrained to interfere, and summon the parties to his own court. Campegius, all along a most servile dependant on the Pope, conducted the investigation to the point when sentence was expected, when to the surprise of every one, he adjourned the business, on the frivolous pretext of being obliged to observe the vacations appointed at Rome; and in the mean time, the citation from the Pope arrived, discharging the commission! Now we ask, on what ground it can be pretended, that the credit of the Reformation was implicated in these events? By no process of reasoning can measures, whose deliberations were confined to the Pope and his Ministers, be made to disgrace a subsequent change. That they prepared the way for this change we acknowledge, and add, that in so doing, they proved its necessity, as the recompense of craft and treachery, and the annihilation of a power, which not content with persecuting its opponents, insulted some of its best friends.

To talk of these transactions of the Pope with Henry, as Religious, would be a prostitution of terms; and viewing them merely as civil or political, nothing can be conceived

more dishonourable. However unjust and vicious were the desires of the English Monarch, the treatment he received from Clement, was equally unjust, and at the same time mercenary and selfish. It would not be difficult to prove, that the divorce for which Henry sued, was perfectly consistent with the genius and character of the Romish Religion; while, according to the grounds on which it was defended by many Roman Catholics themselves, it could only be opposed by the presumption of the Pope in repealing the laws of God. Nothing, however, is more obvious than the truth of this statement, *that up to the time, to which the history has now brought us, Henry had done nothing inconsistent with the faith of a Roman Catholic.* Yet the foundation for the rejection of Papal supremacy, as a state measure, was laid; and what man is there, who with the greatest abhorrence of Henry's character, possesses the least love of honesty, that does not acknowledge the Pope merited no respect at his hands? At the time when this cause was avocated to Rome, there is not the least doubt, that Henry's affections were completely alienated from the Queen, and that his passions were too strongly excited to submit to any unfavourable decision; but, however freely this be admitted, the Reformation suffers nothing. All that we have yet been called to notice, resembles the hatred which has often been generated among men leagued together in dishonest traffic, and who quarrelling in the appropriation of their sinful acquirements, occasion a division of their own party, in favour of what has been the object of their common hostility. The Reformation was, in this respect, the happy result of measures disgraceful to the parties concerned. And here we must strongly solicit the attention of the reader to the necessary distinction subsisting between what was *Political* and what was *Religious*. Any form of Religion, to make its way in a nation, must generally have Political sanction, the connivance, if not the denuded approbation of constituted authorities. This is especially the case, where one form of Religion, and that an intolerant one, has been long established; and where an inno-

vation on the established order, or, in other words, an improvement of abuses, is attempted. Such was the case when the authority of Popery was threatened in England.— Now it is obvious, that the chances among men in power, will always be in favour of the previous order, and that they will give little attention to the intrinsic excellence of any new system of faith or conduct; so that it will generally be found, that they proceed, even in affairs of Religion, upon Political considerations; and that all their patronage is to be accounted for upon principles to which the cause patronized may itself be a stranger. Religion is destined to win its way in the hearts of men, and the Religion of Protestants, sought nothing more than the liberty of appealing to the reason and conscience of the multitude in opposition to Popery. But for this it needed civil facilities, and whatever were the political or personal considerations which induced the King and his Ministers to open the way for a change, the *Reason of the Reformation* is essentially distinct from the politics of the day, and no more accountable for the crimes of the latter in its patronage, than for errors in the politics of war and commerce. This is the question to be answered: is there any thing in the Religion of Protestants which sanctioned the vices of Henry? While to reply in the affirmative, because it stood opposed to Papal supremacy which happened to be opposed to him, is to forget the distinction between what is *Religious* and *Political*, and to confound the nature of things with relations purely accidental. The inversion of rule—the confusion of all order—and the entire neglect of discriminating principles, which Cobbett's remarks on this subject evince, may not prevent his popularity with a certain class, but must infallibly secure the contempt of men who think for themselves, or reflect for a moment on the rationality of what they hear from others. The arguments which, in connection with this subject, Cobbett has attempted, in support of Papal supremacy, do not require much attention in reply. He quotes many Scriptures which

speak of the unity of believers, and sagely supposes, that the only way to preserve this unity, is to bow to the Pope. "How, (he says) is the faith of all nations to continue to be one, if there be, in every nation, a head of the Church, who is to be appealed to, in the last resort, as to all questions, as to all points of dispute which may arise." (Let. 3, §. 86.)—In answer to which he may be told, that the head of a national Church is very different from the head of the whole Christian body, and that even the Church of England does not acknowledge such a head in the King, as he calls upon us to acknowledge in the Pope; or if even this were the case, the principle of dissent would still be left us, with which to oppose ourselves to his conclusions. Beside, is it not a singularly compendious way, which this arbitrator has chosen, to dispose of all Religious differences by erecting one system, *in which he does not believe*, as the standard for mankind? What is this, but saying, we care nothing for the nature of Religious faith, and if we cannot get rid of it altogether, let us have a uniformity of some kind—it matters not true or false—so that we may escape all trouble concerning it? Thus to argue for Papal supremacy on the ground of unity, is first to surrender every thing worth maintaining; while to call that Christian unity, which exists by a compromise of primitive Christianity, is a misnomer the most palpable and absurd.*

* Here we may take the liberty of adverting to a circular lately addressed by the Roman Catholic Clergy of Cheshire to their respective flocks. In this we are told of the "HARBOUR OF SECURITY," and "CENTRE OF UNITY," to which many of their "DISSENTING BRETHREN" are expected, in weariness, to resort. In what part of the country, we ask, have any concessions which can encourage expectations of this nature been made? Why not publish the record? And is it not strange that we only hear of these things in the way of reference, brief and obscure? Dissenters, we may add, however in some instances, they have met with Catholics on the broad ground of civil and religious liberty, would never have thought of finding on this hallowed spot the centre of unity in the standard of Papal supremacy; and will no doubt unite, respectfully but firmly, in telling these candid and mistaken gentlemen, that the very principles on which they have united with them in the cause of emancipation, will for ever forbid them to symbolize, in the least degree, with their Roman peculiarities.

This also reminds us of the unparalleled hardihood in disposition, with which this writer has identified the defence of Papal tyranny with the heroism inspired by the love of liberty. Two Friars, it appears, alarmed at the conduct of Henry VIII. ventured publicly to insult that Monarch; and though his conduct was marked by extraordinary lenity towards them, Cobbett speaks of their merits, and chance of suffering, in a style, in which, losing his famed simplicity, he flies off into flattery and pomp. "Before their conduct (he rapturously exclaims) the heroism of the Hampdens and the Russells sink from our sight!" Well he may say, "Ah, people of England, how have you been deceived?" when it seemed fitter to show us that the cause of freedom, to which Bridgman have been so long attached, is unworthy our devotion.—Glad, shameless apostates, seek those Monks and Friars, who have fled before the light of knowledge,—yet talk us the terms of the compact you seal with them, in which, having sold your own credit, you would betray your country if it were in your power!

THE
PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. VI.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20.

A**FTER** having shown that the first measures which led to the rejection of Papal supremacy in England, were those of Roman Catholics, and that a fair examination proves them to have been independent of Protestantism, and disgraceful to Popery—the advantage of the former, and the crime of the latter—we have disposed of Cobbett's most important calumnies; and we need not in bare justice to our cause be much longer detained by his distortions of History. After, however, leaving the divorce of Catharine, the reign of Henry VIII. is made the subject of four numbers, which on account of their irregularity and incoherency, might almost dismay a respondent. Amidst many facts, some true and others false; some bearing on the subject under discussion, others perfectly irrelevant—amidst incidental topics, some relating to the general principles of the Popish controversy, others being nothing more than an infusion of the writer's political venom—and amidst the most violent abuse, the most riotous and vulgar balderdash, by which facts are perverted, feeble argument presumed to be triumphant, and truth in almost

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every instance disguised—it requires great attention and labour to construct and condense a reply. It becomes the task of the writer to toil through a mass of extraneous matter and reject many things before he can say, this is the fact, or this is the argument, bearing on the History of the English Reformation. Cobbett reminds us of one, who going with a detail of grievances to his legal adviser, should mix with his statements, recollections, surmises, and allusions, the most distant and unconnected, and so occasion infinite trouble in separating his business from the vagaries of his ignorance and passions, before a case could be made out for his counsel. To follow Cobbett through all his wayward course, and present to the public an examination of every thing he has chosen to advance, would swell this work to an inconvenient extent; while in confining ourselves to a Vindication of the English Reformation, it will be unnecessary to incur such an inconvenience. Our readers will easily perceive, that in connection with the reign of Henry VIII. Cobbett's abuse, mainly depends on his statements of the manner in which the denial of Papal supremacy was enforced; and of the measures which were adopted for the suppression of Monastic institutions in England. The observations which are every where profusely scattered, on the importance of Popery to the liberties and happiness of the nation, will come under review towards the close of our undertaking. Our present number will chiefly regard what he has said on the first of these subjects.

After an account of the divorce which we have shown to be partial and false, he thus commences his third letter.—

“No Englishman worthy of that name, worthy of a name which carries along with it *sincerity*, and a *love of justice*; no real Englishman can have contemplated the foul deeds, the base hypocrisy, the flagrant injustice, exposed in the foregoing letter, without blushing for his country. What man, with an honourable sentiment in his mind, is there, who does not almost wish to be a *foreigner*, rather than be the

countryman of Cranmer, and Henry VIII.? If, then, such be our feelings already, what are they to be by the time that we have got through those scenes of tyranny, blood, and robbery, to which the deeds, which we have already witnessed, were merely a prelude?" (Let. 3. § 79.) This it must be acknowledged is somewhat alarming, but not to say, that it is impossible to find in Cobbett's own History, sufficient to justify these violent exclamations in particular connection with the period he describes—he utterly fails to identify the events held up to detestation with the Reformation itself.

His very logical attempt at reasoning for the supremacy of the Pope from Religious considerations, we have already mentioned, and his remarks on its political interference with the King, are equally profound and conclusive. Every objection on this head, he treats with affected derision. "As to the Pope's interference with the authority of the King or state, (he says) the chain plea set up was, and is, that he divided the government with the King, to whom belonged the sole supremacy with regard to every thing within his realm. This doctrine, pushed home, would shut out Jesus Christ himself, and make the King an object of adoration." This is the height of absurdity. If the King deny the political power of the Pope, he can never on the same ground reject the authority of Christ, in the Religion he has instituted. And if the King be independent of a Foreign despot in the government of his own subjects, how is he to be viewed as an object of adoration? But Cobbett adds "Spiritual and temporal authority are perfectly distinct in their nature, and ought so to be kept in their exercise." True, yet this distinction will never warrant a pretension to spiritual authority in things temporal, and leaves at the same time all the Pope's claims to spiritual dictation open to dispute. However revolting it may seem to a confirmed Catholic, we avow no more respect for Clement than for Henry, and if we must recognise an infallible head

in an erring mortal, think it better to bow to our own monarch, than turn to a foreign potentate. And since Cobbett is so anxious for the preservation of unity, he might we think, easily make this anxiety an argument for the King's supremacy. Let him defend the Pope's authority as jesuitically as possible, still it is more than probable, that the Pope of Rome and the King of England will often differ; so that to preserve the unity of the British faith, and the peace of the nation, it is most politic to leave the supremacy to the man who has the sceptre of our realm in his hand. Here our opponent attempts to make himself merry with the independence of those whom he calls the "Protestant Sectarians."

"While they cordially unite with the established Clergy in crying out against the Pope for "usurping" the King's authority, and against the Catholics for countenancing that "usurpation" they take special care to deny that this same King has any spiritual supremacy over themselves!" We are told of the *Synod* of the Presbyterians—the *Conference* of the Methodists—and the *Elders* and *Yearly Meeting* of the Quakers. And then it is added, "Strange enough, or rather *impudent* enough, it is, in these sects, to refuse to acknowledge any spiritual supremacy in the King, while they declaim against the Catholics, because they will not take an oath acknowledging that supremacy;" &c. That dissenters should irritate the spleen of this writer, in proportion to their Religious independence of secular power, is not strange, unless as a proof, that he is consistent with himself for once; but that on this account they should be condemned for *impudence* in opposing Catholics, is "passing strange," and may even startle into surprise the reader best acquainted with his contradictions and absurdities. Roman Catholics acknowledge a head in the Pope; dissenters rejecting this, will not even acknowledge a head in the King, and therefore they stand on common ground! Therefore on the same principle that Catholics have been excluded the senate, Dissenters ought

to be also? This contemptible trifling with the sagacity of his readers, Cobbett has indeed attempted to disguise by the manner in which he states the case, but a moment's reflection on which must expose him to the charge of the most insulting artifice. He observes that Dissenters refuse to acknowledge the spiritual supremacy of the King, that Catholics *do the same*, and that therefore it is impudence for the former to object to the latter. But did he suppose that we should forget, that the Dissenter denies the supremacy of the King in matters of conscience, because he refuses to acknowledge *any such authority*, but that the Papist does the same because *he does acknowledge such an authority in the Pope*? Beside, we may observe that the Dissenter feels bound to obedience in all civil matters by the Religion he professes, but that the Papist may be bound to rebellion (as in the case of excommunication) by the Religious authority he reveres. Let it be observed, we are not contending for the preservation of invidious legal distinctions between these different classes, our remarks solely apply to the distinction of those principles which Cobbett himself brings into notice. We have dwelt longer on this subject, than its intrinsic importance, or relation to the Reformation demands; but our aim is to show the reader, that this vaunting Historian, whose three-penny numbers are to supersede all published Histories for the future, has in almost every respect, forfeited the confidence he claims. He not only distorts facts, but mis-states opinions—sometimes attempts to disjoin immutable relations, and at others, brings together the antipodes of Papists and Protestants.—He writes, in short, like one, who had destroyed every record of former days but his own, and who supposes that by some magic influence he can blind the minds of his readers, and permit them to see, and that without the power of comparison, nothing but the propositions he chooses to form.

The objections to Papal supremacy as a Foreign yoke, and an intolerable exaction on a nation's wealth, are in the next

place, contemptuously treated. The degradation of submission to a foreigner Cobbett affects to regard as trifling, because all other nations have been degraded in the same manner, and Alfred, with a long line of Kings for nine hundred years, patiently endured it! An admirable argument this, for the uniformity and perpetuity of despotism! Does not the reader perceive, that in every argument this man constructs for the Popedom, he intrenches on those sacred principles of liberty, to which he professes his adherence, and without which Religion is degraded into the instrument of tyranny? Not to dwell on the appropriation of the wealth amassed by the Popes, which this economist says, "was so much given for the preservation of unity of faith, peace, good will, and charity and morality;" and which "was extremely well laid out;" we may just observe that this wealth, as drained from the resources of England, is greatly underrated by him. "Mr. Perceval (he tells us) gave more to *foreigners* in one *single* year than the Popes ever received from our ancestors in *four centuries*."—Why *four centuries*?—This is a curious mode of expression—But passing this, let us look at one or two instances of Papal exaction. Ethelwulph, 855, when on a visit to Rome, not only extended the tax called *Peter-pence* over all his dominions, which had been confined to Wessex and Mercia; but bound himself to the annual contribution of three hundred marks; two hundred of which were for wax-tapers, and the remainder to be appropriated to the Pope's own use!* Our readers have not forgotten the demand which the Pope made for a revenue from Ireland, when he gave that country to the sword.† When King John received his crown from the Pope's Legate, he bound himself to pay a yearly rent for his Kingdom of one thousand marks.‡ And in the reign of Henry III. it may be shown that the Pope

* Rapin, B. 4.

† P. 62.

‡ Rapin B. 4.

drew from Eng^d and *seventy thousand pounds* annually. §— From the second year of Henry VII. to the rejection of Papal authority by Henry VIII. no less a sum than *one hundred and sixty seven thousand* pounds had been paid to the see of Rome for first fruits, palls, bulls, &c.|| In short, whoever reflects for a moment, on the innumerable and subtle means to which the Popes resorted, and which they often most rigorously pressed, for the augmentation of their wealth, will be surprised that any man could put the foreign expenditure of a single Minister, and that of a Minister whose date was brief, on a level with Popish exactions for centuries. The commutation of penance for money—the purchase of masses—the sale of indulgences—the grant of dispensations—the Popes' appropriation of English benefices—together with annual tithes, annates, and taxes levied by the Legates, must have created a revenue for the aggrandizement of a foreign despot, which impoverished and threatened to exhaust the nation. For the sake of exoneration from such oppressive burdens, the Reformation ought to be viewed as a national blessing, securing our freedom, and augmenting our happiness, by every accidental bearing it possessed on our political circumstances.

The abolition of Papal supremacy in England, Cobbett repeatedly tells us, was effected by “shedding innocent blood;” and in confirmation of this, he has presented his readers with a highly coloured sketch of the imprisonment and execution of More and Fisher. These men enjoyed a great reputation, and the former especially was celebrated for his learning and genius throughout Europe. They were both, however, at the period of the divorce, rigid Papists; and

§ “In the reign of Henry III. by the profits of Church benefices, and by the exactions of the Pope, no less a sum than 70,000*l.* was sent yearly out of England; an immense sum in those days” (I Hawk. 50) Burgess Cat. P. 13

as such stood opposed to the measures of the King and Parliament. We do not wish by a single syllable to tarnish their reputation for perseverance in the course they believed to be right,—let the Roman Catholic, if he please, respect them as upright men, and lament them as the holiest martyrs his cause ever had—we wish it, however, to be recollected, that the circumstances of the time, the turn which political affairs had taken, rendered it almost impossible for them to allowed the merit of perseverance without danger. The question in debate was the source of supremacy; the Parliament gave it to the King, but they persisted in refusing their concurrence; while their reputation, which leads us to regret their death, rendered connivance at their conduct proportionally perilous. Under these circumstances, it was scarcely possible that they could remain in England, before the eyes of the public, without endangering the new authority of the King on the one hand, or their own lives on the other. We are not, in offering these remarks, defending the severity of their treatment; our simple aim is to show the reader that as the abolition of Papal supremacy on the part of Henry did not proceed on any Religious principle, so the support of this abolition, in the punishment of More and Fisher for treason, is to be viewed entirely as a political measure, which circumstances were thought to render necessary. They were not punished as Roman Catholics, but as contemners of the King's authority. Beside, little personal hatred was ever manifested towards them; there is no reason to suppose that the King desired their death, if it had been possible to spare them without injury to the prerogative he claimed. Fisher, in particular, had deeply involved himself in the suspicion of encouraging the gross imposition of the infamous *Maid of Kent*; who pretended to bestow the sanction of divine inspiration on the most violent opposition to the King, predicting that if he proceeded in the divorce, *he must die a villain's death.*

Now we ask, what has the Protestant Reformation—the Reformation of Religion—to do with this? Its principles and its advocates do not appear. The abolition of Papal supremacy originated in political abuses, and the King's supremacy became no more a part of the Protestant Religion, than the Pope's had been. Amidst inflictions of death for treason, the Reformation was proceeding among the people in the discussion of principles and the gradual substitution of enlightened piety, in the place of ignorance and ceremony.—There is, however, one subject of importance, which remains to be mentioned, Cobbett charges all the tyrannic acts of Henry on Protestants, and when in his narrative he finds himself at a loss how to mix the names of Protestant leaders with deeds of cruelty and oppression, he no sooner flies off into exclamations, than these names serve him to point his expressions of disgust and abhorrence. Hence he never uses the name of Cranmer when he is giving the history of More and Fisher, but after mentioning in connection with them, the death of another Papist, he says, “these horrid butcheries were perpetrated, mind, under the primacy of Fox's great martyr Crámmér, and with the active agency of another ruffian, named Thomas Cromwell,” &c. (Let. 3. § 96.) Here it is natural to observe, that the Primate ought not to be made accountable for all the acts of his Sovereign; and that he might have opposed these tragic measures in vain. And many of our readers, will perhaps be surprised to find that this is the record, of which Cobbett cannot be supposed to be ignorant. Cranmer, as appears from a letter to Cromwell, advised that More and Fisher should be allowed to swear on their own terms, which were to acknowledge the succession appointed by the King, though they refused to bow to his supremacy; while of Cromwell, More himself wrote, that he *tenderly favoured him*.* The attainder and execution of the

* Burnet. Vol. 1. 156. Collier P. 2. B. 2.

Countess of Salisbury, were both in their origin and process far different from what Cobbett describes, but we presume it is unnecessary, further to expose what, better or worse, had little or no relation to the Reformation. It cannot, however, escape the notice of Cobbett's readers, that the "rivers of innocent blood," with which his bewildered imagination seems perpetually haunted, were neither shed by Protestants, nor chiefly "fed" by the blood of Roman Catholics. In proof of this we need scarcely go further than his own pages. For in his anxiety not to spare Henry in the least, he seizes every opportunity of extending the amount of his atrocities, and in so doing, proves that wherever his Religious prejudices were concerned, his cruelties were unbounded towards the Protestants themselves. "Though the tyrant (he says) was bent on destroying the Catholic Church, he was not less bent on the extirpation of the followers of Luther, and his tribe of new sects." (Let. 3. § 102.) Now the rejection of Papal supremacy was the original sin, the capital crime of Henry's life, in the eyes of the Papists; and his attachment to their dogmas and ceremonies in other things, was the source of his hostility to Protestants. It is nothing more, therefore, than historical simplicity, as well as a distribution of moral justice to say, that in opposition to the Pope he was not a Protestant, but that in his persecution of Protestants he was a Roman Catholic—for let it be all along recollected, that from the Pope he had appealed to a general council. Every one must perceive that the martyrdoms of his reign could not consist of Roman Catholics, who had not placed themselves in opposition to the royal supremacy, because it was to their party that the principles and prejudices of the King were devoted; and Cranmer and Cromwell were always in greater danger themselves, than on any religious pretext they could involve others. All the "horrid butcheries" of which Cobbett speaks, were confined to a few inter-

perate rebels against the King's power, while even during the primacy of Cranmer, Protestants were brought to the stake, for teaching children the Lord's prayer,—denying the real presence—or possessing heretical books! Much blood indeed was shed during this period, but when swelled into "rivers" and "torrents," it was through the agency of Roman Catholics themselves, eager and vindictive in the extirpation of what they called heresy.

In this place, perhaps it may be best to call the attention of the reader for another moment to the character of Cranmer. And though we wish it to be carefully observed, that the principles of Protestantism are invaluable, whatever have been the errors of their advocates—though we would watch against that partiality which is wont to extenuate what is really reprehensible in our friends—we do not hesitate to defend the Archbishop; as in the present case, the victim of injustice; and freely award him the praise of a truly great and good man. We are not to be deterred from rendering him the tribute which Religion owes to his memory, by any or all of the misconstructions, slanders, and falsehoods, which Cobbett has heaped upon it, but feel relief and triumph in beholding him, amidst the wickedness and dangers of his day, the dread and abhorrence of the Papist on account of his virtue. "The progress of this man in the paths of infamy (Cobbett says) needed incontestible proof to reconcile the human mind to a belief in it." And if there was a necessity of this kind once, we may add it remains at the present day. But what "incontestible proof," what pretension or shadow of evidence, does Cobbett afford? Asserting the most revolting things, he does not give a single reference—nay—does not support his most important charges by any of the facts distorted in his own meagre, and unauthenticated History. Cranmer's marriage in Germany, while a former wife was living, is equally false and absurd. It is false, for his first wife died long before

he removed from the University;† and it is absurd, since he makes the Romish law for celibacy the *standard of Protestant morality*! Beside which we may observe, that though Cranmer did not deem himself under any obligation to observe the Religious prohibition of Rome, no sooner was a law enacted in England against the marriage of priests, than in the singularly conscientious discharge of his duty as a subject, he prevailed on his wife to return to her friends abroad-- When speaking of his share in the divorce, nothing can be conceived more disgusting than Cobbett's exclamations of horror at conduct which was altogether unassuming and open. The first advice which Cranmer gave the King, was to consult the Universities of Europe, and be regulated by their decision. This advice was candid and moderate, betraying nothing of the violence of prejudice or ambition. And when we recollect that the legality, or morality of Henry's marriage, divided at that time the Romish Church itself, it is a very trifling exercise of candour to suppose, that Cranmer was conscientious in defending the divorce projected. And what he subsequently did, as Primate, in pronouncing sentence, cannot on the supposition of his sincerity, be considered in any degree criminal. His conduct also, when the tide of royal favour turned against Ann Boleyn may be shown to have been grateful and compassionate towards the unhappy Queen, and honourable to the principles he professed.‡ Ha

† See Strype's "Memorial" "Life, State, Story, and Martyrdom of Cranmer," published in his controversy with Gardiner, 1580.

‡ "I am in such a perplexity, that my mind is clean amazed. For I never had better opinion in woman, than I had in her, which maketh me to think, "that she should not be culpable.---Now I think that your Grace best knoweth, that next unto your Grace, I was bound unto her of all creatures living. Wherefore I most humbly beseech your Grace to suffer me in "that, which both God's Law, Nature, and also her kindness bindeth me "unto; that is, that I may with your Grace's favour, wish and pray for her, "that she may declare herself inculpable and innocent." Cranmer's Letter to the King. Burnet. Vol. j. 200.

manifested, with a boldness which none equalled, his attachment to her cause, employed, even by letter, all his influence to soften the animosity of the King; and when he pronounced the sentence of divorce, of which Cobbett speaks so unfairly, it was in consequence of the Queen's own acknowledgement of a pre-contract, which, though it was no doubt wrung from her by the terrors of her approaching fate, deprived him of every pretence for objecting to the King's wishes. The charges preferred against him for persecution during the reign of his capricious and haughty master, are altogether incapable of proof; and the manner in which Cobbett describes him, as abounding in the destruction of Protestants, is equally contradictory and unwarrantable. At one time he is described as destroying all who differed from him, and so causing "rivers" and "torrents of innocent blood" to flood the land; but at another time the victims of this imaginary tyranny, are said to be these who were in agreement with him. In one place we are taught that the Reformation was fed by the blood of Roman Catholics, and are soon required to believe, that it prospered by Cranmer's destruction of its adherents! The plain state of the case is, that the greater number of martyrdoms under Henry, were those of Protestants, which were procured by the activity of men who were in avowed opposition to Cranmer, and who publicly sought his ruin; § while the death of such men as More and Fisher was the necessary result of the King's own measures. If the cruelties of this period promoted the Reformation, it was not by the death of its enemies, so much as by the display of their sanguinary spirit in the persecution of its friends; in which the crimes of men were made to subserve the cause they hated, strengthening

§ Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, at the head of many other Roman Catholics represented, to Henry the dangerous spread of heresy on account of his protection of Cranmer; and as they had recently procured the fall of Cromwell, they entertained strong hopes of attaining the Primate's ruin. But his unweariness with the King, saved him. Burnet. Vol. 1. 328.

the opposition they were vainly attempting to quell. And though Cranmer might have been disposed in the possession of power, to restrict that liberty of thinking and of acting in Religion, which we now claim as our unalienable right, but which in his day was recognized by scarcely any one, the tenor of his life was meek and tolerant. His kindness to his enemies was constant and almost unexampled; and so accustomed was he to recompense good for evil, that it became a proverb—‘Do my Lord of Canterbury an injury, and you make him a friend for life.’¶ In addition to his benevolence unchecked by the enmity of others, that heart must be dead to the sense of excellence, which does not admire his adherence to principle amidst great exposure to danger. Though he did not wantonly risk his credit with the King, and though some may be tempted to suppose that his compliance with the royal wish was carried to a censurable degree, the whole history of his life proves that he never extended it to cases, which appeared to him to involve the least sacrifice of truth. He balanced with no common sincerity his integrity as a Protestant, with allegiance to the enemy of his faith. And as bad men are often compelled to feel “how awful goodness is,” and to excuse their own vices by rewarding the virtue of others. Henry was constrained to revere him in his unprotected situation, and amidst the insincerity of his Roman Catholic courtiers, found relief in reposing on his honesty. The *Six Articles* by which Popish dogmas, the most offensive to this

¶ Of this we have one striking instance connected with the opposition mentioned in the preceding note. Two of the Conspirators against his credit and life, were men whom he had greatly befriended, and when overwhelmed with dismay at his discovery of their treachery, they expected punishment at his hands, “he frankly forgave them all.” Afterwards he engaged in soliciting a favour from the King on behalf of one of his secret accusers, and when the King informing him of the case, ordered him to go and upbraid the wretch, he refused to obey, as inconsistent with the forbearance of a Christian Bishop! To defame, with such remorseless hate as Cobbett has done, so exemplary a character, is to serve in no ordinary degree the cause of the “Accuser of the Brethren.” Burnet. Vol. 1. 329.

Prelate, were enforced with all the authority of Parliament, exhibit his character in a light which challenges our respect. He opposed the Bill in its progress through the House, and though the King desired his absence if he could not comply, he insisted on remaining to vote against it, as the necessary discharge of his duty to Religion. And since the design of Henry in this bill was evidently to save his credit with his Roman Catholic subjects, and to check the Reformation, the decided opposition of the Archbishop must have been conscientious and heroic. We are not, however, we repeat, resting the merits of our cause on the perfection of Cranmer. We recollect his rigour under Edward VI. and the *temporary* surrender he made to his enemies before his death, with regret. In addition to which, his protestation in one place against the obligation of his oath in another, when consecrated to the see of Canterbury, is conduct we are not disposed for a moment to defend; though recollecting the perplexing casuistry of the age, many admissions in support of his integrity ought to be made. At the same time we may observe, that to reason on this point with the advocate of Popery is completely out of place, since he is requiring on our part what has always been considered unnecessary on his; and objecting that to our principles which the judges of his faith have defended on their own. In short, the character of Cranmer, though it partook of human imperfection was substantially formed on those principles which constitute the worth and happiness of society. He was one of the lights of the age, but shining amidst great corruptions, and transmitting his rays to us over a long track of time, and through a gross atmosphere, he may in some respects appear feeble to our distant gaze. But we do not expect the stars by night to equal the splendour of the meridian sun; and amidst our present advantages, which might prevent any excuse for conduct in our case resembling certain parts of his, he ought to be recollected, as one of those orbs, whose glimmer thwarting the profound-

gloom of ignorance and superstition, was safety to bewildered multitudes. Any reader who will take the trouble to acquaint himself with Cranmer's history—and if he be capable of estimating excellence, he must find the toil converted to pleasure—will revolt at the calumnies with which Cobbett insults his memory; speaking of him, on every occasion, in language, which ought to be applied to none, but the vilest refuse of the human race. Determining to involve the record of our Reformation in the darkness of prejudice, he met Cranmer in his way, enlightening with the radiance of his virtue the most eventful crisis of our history, and applied himself to the task of defamation, with the same feeling which leads the perpetrator of public crimes to extinguish, in the season of his depredations, every light with which he meets. The man who libels living worth is amenable to our laws, and so ought the literary assassin of memorialized excellence to possess the execration he endeavours to procure for others.—And as long as public feeling retains an attachment to justice, it is not the gibbeted felon who will move our severest indignation, and be felt to have injured us most deeply; but the man who endeavours to supplant merited veneration by unfounded abhorrence; and robbing us of those examples of good, which history has left us, leaves us nothing on which love and gratitude can repose in the memory of our fathers.

THE
PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. VII.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3.

ONE of the measures, most important to Protestantism, was the suppression of Monastic Institutions. It was laying open the strong hold of Popery, and destroying its bulwarks, and cannot, therefore, be recollected by a Papist without grief and indignation; while the Protestant bails it as a happy event, which greatly contributed to the emancipation of our country from the most degrading system of superstition and imposture. Apart from the spirit of dissension, the history of this subject has unfolded scenes, before which virtue veils herself and retires in silence; and the severest condemnation which Religion has to pronounce on impiety, is felt to be just, and scarcely of sufficient weight for the crimes that invoke it.

It is unnecessary to detail to our readers the ancient history and general progress of Monachism. Distinguished by the unnatural, and in some instances brutal fanaticism of its solitary heroes, it rapidly spread into every land where the Christian name was professed. Then having become the prevalent corruption of Christianity, it drew into its vortex both learning and science; and boasting of its exclusive

possession of all that was valuable to the world, left the world a desert. Whatever was the design formed by the original Monks of Egypt and Palestine, from whom the mania of this superstition spread to the West, there can be little doubt of the policy by which the Popes of Rome were induced to give it every advantage in Europe; and especially of the reasons for its excessive encouragement in England, first at the instigation of Dunstan, an execrable name in the annals of the English Church. Suffice it to observe, that Monasteries multiplied so exceedingly, that the number suppressed by Henry, is said to have been six hundred and forty five; so that independent of Protestant objections, they must have been formidable to an enterprising Monarch, ambitious for the extension of his prerogative. "The great increase of Monasteries (Hume observes) if matters be considered merely in a political light, will appear the radical inconvenience of the Catholic Religion, and every other disadvantage attending that communion, seems to have an inseparable connection with these Religious institutions."* Like all establishments which stand in the way of public improvement, their prosperity was the prelude to their ruin, and when they had become immensely rich and powerful, jealousy was sure to be awakened, and hostility exhibited. To describe their suppression as one of the common revolutions of time, and to account for it on general principles which apply to the decline and fall of all public bodies, might be made an interesting task; but our present business is to narrow our views, and look to its particular causes in relation to the sentiments of a peculiar order of men. The Monastic establishment has fallen, and Protestantism has flourished in its place. This is the fact, the history of which we are briefly to examine, with the design of ascertaining how far it discredits the Reformation of Religion among us. That the principles of a Protestant are subversive of Monachism,

* Hume, c. 12.

is avowed; and any disgrace supposed to be implied in this opposition, is the subject in debate. That Protestants were engaged in the suppression of Monasteries is not denied, for this may have been in honourable agreement with their principles. The only way of making the history of Monasteries an objection to Protestantism, is by showing, on calculations of civil and Religious interest, that we have lost by their destruction. Cobbett has boldly attempted this, though he too frequently engages in ill-timed appeals to our compassion on behalf of men, whom he fails to make worthy of its exercise, "We have seen then,"—he thus commences his fourth letter,—“We have seen then, that the Reformation was engendered in beastly lust, brought forth in hypocrisy and perfidy, and we have had some specimens of the acts by which it caused innocent blood to be shed.” He thus confidently advances, as if he were going over the steps of a mathematical demonstration, when every one who has followed him, must be amused at his complacency, amidst the contempt he has purchased by failure in each particular; and must prepare for additional errors both of prejudice and passion. He proceeds to describe his theme: “We shall now see how it (the Reformation) devastated and plundered the country, what poverty and misery it produced, and how it laid the sure foundation for that pauperism, that disgraceful immorality; that fearful prevalence of crime of all sorts; which now so strongly mark the character of this nation, which was formerly the land of virtue and of plenty.”—(Let. 4. § 111.)

The first topic, is the celibacy of the Monks, and its awful consequences in a flood of licentiousness, never exceeded, even perhaps, in Sodom or Gomorrah.† “Now this (Cobbett says) is a very important matter. It is a great moral question, and therefore, we ought to endeavour to settle this

† If we mistake not, CARDINAL DAMIANO published a complaint on this subject, entitled “GOMORRAH!”

question ; to make up our minds completely upon it, before we proceed any further" (Let. 4. § 122.) And afterwards speaking of the Reformation he says, "Of all its consequences that of introducing a *married Clergy* has, perhaps, been the most prolific in mischief." (Let. 4. § 127.) However trifling this subject, may at first appear to some persons, who may be tempted to regard it entirely as an affair of convenience or inclination ; a little enquiry will teach us to consider it "a great *moral* question," as Cobbett states it, involving the principal causes of the political power and moral deterioration of the *Romish Clergy*. Monachism could not exist without it. It freed the Monks, from every obligation inconsistent with the ambition of their order ; and left them no duty to discharge, nor any pleasure to enjoy, but what bound them to their establishment. As the policy of men eager for the possession of power, and as the policy of Satan, promoting by his infernal machinations the iniquity of mankind, it is unrivalled in the annals of invention. Without it the Clergy might have sanctified the most important relations of life, and "all the charities of father, son, and brother," would have made them feel a common interest in the virtue and happiness of the laity ; but the law which enforced their celibacy, independent of particular circumstances or personal inclination, poured contempt on the institution, the veneration of which is essential to public virtue ; and destroying every bond by which sacred instructors themselves should be held, erected them into a body independent of the domestic, civil, and as it is easy to show, the *Religious* interest of the people. Whatever may be said by the advocate of celibacy on the necessity of freeing them from particular domestic and social encumbrances, the annihilation of a *domestic and social INTEREST* is, on the pretence of multiplying their opportunities of usefulness, to destroy the motive to this end. To form any class of men independent of the people, is a political evil, unfriendly to the liberties of a nation. This has always

furnished a great objection, to one for instance, of Cobbett's objects of terror, "a standing army;" and may be allowed to render us jealous of the power of any establishment, civil or Religious. Hence to form an order which does not stand merely on the calculations of wealth and honour, but in the annihilation of all natural interests with others, is to commit ourselves to men—or we may perhaps better say, to a factitious rank of beings among men—who without the ties of kindred, or any community of feeling, are open to the strongest temptations to despise and injure us. The affections were given by a benevolent Creator, that in their tempered indulgence, and the consequent relations of life, mankind might form but one family; and however separated from others the Clergy ought to appear in the elevation of their designs, and the fervour of their devotion, they should still be made to feel their relationship; and be impelled by the constitution of nature into the same direction, as their sacred obligations point out. Particular affections, developed through a long train of social connections, act on the preservation of social virtue and happiness, like the power of gravitation on the harmony of the material system. But when they are proscribed, men are no longer like those orbs which maintain an equable revolution, but are in danger of resembling the comet in its eccentric course, and in the power which superstition has ascribed to it, of "shaking from its horrid hair, pestilence and war." It will not be forgotten, that it was by the principle of contempt for social obligations, which lies at the foundation of clerical celibacy, that the philosophical millennium of which certain French Revolutionists dreamed, was to be realized; and the horrors which their brief career exhibited, ought to warn us against every system to which it belongs. If there be any truth in these remarks, they effectively dispose of the contrast which Cobbett has formed between a married and unmarried Clergy, and show the insignificance, in the present instance,

of his list of obligations to dependance, which domestic relations create. If he could prove that in the proportion in which men are detached from others, they feel an interest in their welfare, we might allow him the commendation of a conclusive reasoner; but as long as the contrary is the fact, standing in daily, natural, and immutable opposition to his theory, he must be considered to have failed. It is not sufficient to reply, that the Clergy ought not to be considered as needing inferior ties to bind them to the people, because they are bound to promote their interests by the peculiar nature of their own profession; for whilst the Clergy as a body possesses human passions, the natural operation of these must be taken into the account; and the probability is, that when they are not made by their exercise to subserve sacred obligations, they will violently outrage both Religion and decency. This probability is not supported by a reference, merely, to the tendencies or imperfections of human nature; but by reflecting that all great establishments, however religious their pretensions may be, will include many who are influenced by secondary and unworthy considerations, and who are incapable of being led by the high and holy obligations implied in monastic rules. To place such men under the law of celibacy, was certain to realize the disgusting evils which their history unfolds. To proceed with them on the presumption of their refinement from the dregs of mortality, was to open the flood-gate to their licentiousness; and calculating on a purity in Monasteries which ought not to have been expected, to reduce them to an infamy which was never apprehended. Besides, in this case, it seems to be entirely forgotten, that the social affections are the most virtuous, and capable of the greatest Religious improvement. However they may encumber a priest, by making him feel that he has many dependants, for whom he should seek a provision; they call that benevolence into exercise, without which personal Religion (if there could then be such a

thing) loses its amiability and relative importance. The holy designs of the Gospel are fulfilled to the greatest extent, when its influence is brought to bear on the common and most intimate connections of man; and hence, when its Ministers are felt to be members of our families, enforcing their official precepts by all the winning authority of the Parent, or the conciliating regard of the Brother, they are on every principle of moral calculation, more likely to be useful, than when inclosed within the walls of a Monastery, cut off from the endearments of society. By their social relationship, in fact, the "water of life," is sent into the purest and most important channels, circulating it widely with constant freshness; while Monachism may be compared to an artificial reservoir, where it is stagnant and corrupt. These remarks, let it be observed, are not intended to be applied to individuals; for some particular cases may be imagined in which Religious obligations are inconsistent with the formation of inferior ties; but they belong to the state of society, and the general tendency of a law, made without limitation, for a large class of men. If we should be told this is merely theory, we reply that the merits of this case, may be easily determined by an appeal to facts. Here we might in the first place, challenge our opponents to a comparison of their *Celibes* with the activity and devotedness of the Ministers of the Protestant Religion. The Monks, it is freely acknowledged have in some instances, as in the case of Austin, been laborious missionaries; but not to say that these instances chiefly belong to the early period of their institution, it is sufficient to observe, that their zeal is in no degree singular or superior when we look in the present day to Africa or Hindostan. Without being constrained by a vow of celibacy, how many Protestants are there, who though they do not equal Simeon Stylites† in fruitless austerities, yet standing among the most

† This celebrated Monk lived thirty years on the top of a column, successively raised from the height of 9 to 60 feet. In this sublime elevation, from

efficient benefactors of the human race, exhibit the virtue of self-denial, in almost equal proportions of loss to themselves, and gain to others. But to 'bring' this subject to another point, which our historian has laboriously and unfairly evaded, we inquire what the consequences of constrained celibacy have been on the morals of the Monks, and through them on the morals of the people? Here without attempting a detail of disgusting facts, we may boldly challenge the advocates of Monachism to meet us openly, and content ourselves with his refusal of the challenge. Will he deny that in proportion to celibacy concubinage prevailed both among Priests and Monks? Can it be contradicted that when married Priests were deprived of their benefices, vicious indulgences were lightly punished;—nay, that by submitting to a tax Priests had the highest sanction in the most degrading intercourse? §. Beside, have not Monasteries been so far corrupted that the hand of Papal power has itself been stretched out to reform or suppress them; while some of the firmest friends of the Popedom have loudly complained of their profligacy? ||. Have not English

the world, it was his favourite employment to study different postures of devotion; and on one occasion, a curious spectator, after numbering ~~twelve~~ ~~HUNDRED AND FORTY FOUR~~ repetitions, at length desisted from the endless account. His life, his "celestial life," was probably shortened by an ulcerated thigh. "I must not conceal (says Mr. Gibbon, in his elegant sketch of the Institution of the Monastic life) a piece of ancient scandal concerning the origin of this ulcer. It has been reported, that the devil, assuming an angelic form, invited him to ascend, like Elijah, into a fiery chariot. The saint too hastily raised his foot, and Satan seized the moment of inflicting this chastisement on his vanity!"—Gib. Decline and Fall, &c. vol. 6, c. 37.

§ D'Espérence speaks of one Bishop, who boasted that he had above a thousand Priests that availed themselves of the advantage of this tax; and who stated, that it was his plan to demand the tax of all, and leave the indulgence to their own pleasure.—Dr. Pagitt's Christianography, B. 2, p. 31.

|| For instance, the order of the HUMILIATI was so remarkable for licentiousness, that Pius V. 1571, suppressed it. Mosh. Cent. 13. c. 8. In the 15 Cent. the most distinguished Members of the Roman Catholic community were most distinguished by their zeal in monastic Reformation. At this period the Benedictines, whose order was originally severe, were obliged to be submitted to a renewing process. 1b. Cent. 15. c. 2.

Monasteries been often convicted of the most flagitious conduct? Does not the "Penitentiary" of Egbert prove their ancient corruption, and if exaggeration be supposed in the report of Henry's Commissioners, were the alleged facts of licentiousness ever disproved? Now, the grand argument for celibacy is completely answered by the adduction of these facts. It is on the ground of Religious advantage, that the measure in question has been contended for, but history proves that instead of any advantage of this kind being realized, all Religious obligations have been grossly violated, and the institutions founded on this fallacious principle have speedily and extensively become poisoned fountains or nurseries of

* On this subject it is more agreeable to quote, than to compose. Dr. Lingard with high literary reputation has stood forward as the advocate of celibacy, and we gladly avail ourselves of the point and research of one of his reviewers. "But Dr. Lingard read the Penitentiary of Archbishop Egbert, and then boast if he can of the purity of his Anglo-Saxon Church. "It is not to be credited that an Archbishop of York, would have raked together, for the edification of his Clergy such a mass of evidence, if the practices he prohibits; had not existed. Where there is much smoke there must be some fire. On a subject like this we cannot descend to particulars. "Suffice it to say, that there is no species of turpitude, known to the most licentious of the Roman poets; or practised by the most shameless of their Emperors, that is not gravely enumerated in this Penitentiary, and "a suitable penance enjoined for it, corresponding to the enormity of the offence, and to the rank and quality of the offender. So many years penance was required from a Bishop for crimes not fit to be named. So much less from a Priest or Deacon; and so much less still from a BEADLING; or juvenile competitor for the sanctuary. Dr. Lingard cannot have been ignorant of the passages to which we allude. He has frequently referred to the Penitentiary of Egbert, and quoted it as oft as it served his purpose. "He is aware that it was composed before the Danish invasion; to which, he attributes the subsequent immorality of the Saxon Clergy and people: "If decency induced him to silence, why impose upon his readers by "praising a Church where such disorders prevailed? Why reserve his entire wrath for the MARRIED Priests? Why throw a veil over excesses, which appear to have diminished among the Clergy in proportion as their marriages, though uncanonical, came to be nearly universal?" Dr. Lingard speaks of the RUSTY of double monasteries, in which a convent of Monks or Canons was annexed to a nunnery, and subjected to an Abbess; and says, that the monastery of Coldingham ALONE forms an exception. The Reviewer observes

vice. To defend them on such a principle, after it has been tried for a long time, and on a wide scale, betrays equal ignorance of human nature, and contempt for the testimony of History.

To return to Cobbett. Having dismissed this troublesome topic, we are next entertained with some pointless criticisms on Hume, whose composition it is at length discovered, is so barbarous as never to have been exceeded by illiterate Monks. Then follows a long quotation from Bishop Tanner, with whom Hume is confronted for a moment, and finally dispatched.

"The hardihood of this assertion excites, we must confess, our admiration. Dr. Lingard is not unacquainted with an ancient tract attributed to Bede, from which it plainly appears, that practices the most repugnant to monastic purity, were not unknown among the female inmates of the Saxon cloister.* He is aware that nunneries were converted into Brothels, by some of the Anglo-Saxon Princes, and that infanticide was no unfrequent consequence of this prostitution. St. Boniface reproaches Ethelbald of Mercia with his libertinism; and adds, 'Quod hoc scelus maxime cum SACRIFICIUM et SACRATUM Dno virginibus per monasteria commissum sit.' The whole nation of the Angles, he subjoins, imitate their Sovereign in his wickedness, and this general depravity leads to the frequent commission of child murder; 'quia dum illæ meretrices sive sæculares, sive MONASTERIALES, male conceptas seboles in peccatis genuerint, eas sæpe maxima ex parte occidunt.' Other Saxon Kings were not more exemplary than Ethelbald. We are told on the same unimpeachable authority, that Osred of Northumberland, and Cœlfred of Mercia, had passed their lives 'in stupratione et adulterio nonnarum'—"per monasteria nonnarum SACRATAS VIRGINES stuprantes." We shall not prosecute the subject farther. Enough has been said to show, that the virgins of Coldingham were not the ONLY exception from the general party of manners and strictness of conduct attributed by Dr. Lingard to our Anglo-Saxon race." Edinburgh Review, No. 83. pp. 16. 18.

The result of the visitation of Monasteries appointed by Henry VIII. is well known, for with a few exceptions, these institutions were charged with the vices and crimes which they could not deny. Many immediately resigned, while Abbots sat silent in Parliament, when the case came before them. Through the full report of the visitation is lost, Burnet refers to an extract (Oxon. Lib.) describing the state of 144 houses, in details, too gross to be repeated. Vol. 1. p. 121.

* De remedio peccatorum. † Wilkins Conc. 1. 88. ‡ Ib. p. 89.

ed to the shades; † That particular Monks and Monasteries have been useful, it would be useless to deny, and a difficulty has often been experienced in proportioning the praise, due to them in some respects, as the preservers of learning, and the benefactors of the needy. The prevalence of ignorance, during a long period of their establishment has led some to despise, as illiterate, every man who took the cowl and sought the cloister; while on the other hand, a few Benedictines, for instance, devoted to letters, have induced many to look upon each Monk as a doctor, and every Monastery as a College. Testimonies to their excellence may be derived from Protestant writers, who while they have condemned the establishment, have been anxious to save the credit of a few men, that would have done credit to a better cause. We allow Bishop Tanner to remind us of the *Scripturists*, where the Fathers, Classics, Historians, &c. were transcribed—we do not deny that Historians for centuries were Monks, but we are not disposed to surrender the interests of morality and Religion (to say nothing just now of an advance in learning) to the convenience of transcribers. And we add, that their blunders and corruptions often rendered them worse than useless, and that classical manuscripts, defaced by the inscription of some monastic legend, formed no very valuable legacy for posterity; while the histories they composed, remain, in many instances, monuments of their folly, and often leave the periods they memorialized in the greatest uncertainty. It is pleasing to indulge the fancy, that while a night of ignorance brooded over the world, there could any where be found a cloistered community engaged in collecting the relics of literature; to adopt Cobbett's quotation from the *Quarterly*, "It seems like a green oasis amid the desert." But we fear therein

† Can any thing exceed the RIDICULOUS of such passages as this?—
"Back then, down them, malignant-lies, and tell the devil that the Protest-
tant Bishop Tanner has sent thee!" Let. 4. § 134.

some illusion in these reflections. The distressing ignorance of past ages, which serves by contrast to exalt our ideas of the worth of Monastic institutions, was in no small degree, the effect of these institutions themselves. For though we are reminded that they were schools, the policy of their superstition prevented the impartation of that lore which enlightens and liberalizes the mind; and its influence promoting indolence among themselves, was far from encouraging a thirst for knowledge in the multitude around them: We are not disposed therefore, to join hastily in lauding Monasteries as the depositories of learning; truth obliges us to consider them, rather, as the caves of plunderers, where much wealth may sometimes be amassed, but always at a public loss, and where every thing is doomed to disorder and injury. And instead of comparing them to the "oasis of the desert," they remind us of the *Upas tree*, which caused the desolation amid which it flourished. If we attempt to pierce the profound gloom of a Monastery, and see the Monks in their shored retirement, freed by their celibacy from domestic cares, and by common consent from the toils of business, we shall generally return from the visit disappointed and disgusted. Numbers of them were incapable of reading their breviaries, or writing their names; and when we recollect that their numbers were preserved and increased by the accession of men from the world, who had spent their years in courts or camps, and who at length sought relief from public execration for their crimes, and from the torment of their own reflections, we need not be surprised at the discovery of their ignorance. The schools, of which their adulators are accustomed to speak so extravagantly, could be of little importance to the dissemination of knowledge, since every department of learning and science was shut up from the vulgar, by an attachment to their barbarous Latin, the rudiments of which were nearly all they taught. What literary compositions have they left us to admire, compared with their numbers and opportunity?

By what improvements in science have they benefited the world, as might have been expected from their advantages? Roger Bacon, indeed, in England, stands like the oasis, not merely in the desert of the world, but amid the desolation of Monachism itself. He was feared by the literati of his age as a magician; and professed his contempt for all their pretensions.† It is absurd to talk of benefactions to learning and science, where there is no advance in knowledge. The middle ages took in no small degree their character from Monachism, when to assert a new opinion was perilous, for every innovation was heresy, and all discovery impious. What learning has been promoted by Catholics has chiefly been by the establishment of Colleges and Universities, at a comparatively recent period; and for whose support in England in the time of Wolsey, the Pope gave an order for the suppression of several Monastic houses.‡ In short, notwithstanding the appointment of innumerable orders of Monks,

† See Mosheim's Note, Cent. 13. c. 1.

‡ In support of many of the statements in the text, we copy the following remarks and references, from a learned note of Robertson. And here we may observe, that it is almost impossible to maintain a constant distinction between Priests and Monks; our remarks on celibacy, principally applied to the effects of that law on both; and in the following note of Robertson also the reputation of both is concerned. "Many dignified Ecclesiastics could not subscribe the Canons of those councils in which they sat as members. *Nouveau Traité de Diplom.* tom. 2. p. 484. One of the questions appointed by the Canons to be put to persons who were candidate for orders, was this; 'Whether they could read the Gospels and Epistles, and explain the sense of them, at least literally?' *Regino Prumiensis ap. Bruck. Hist. Philos.* Vol. 2. p. 631. Alfred the Great complained, that from the Humber to the Thames, there was not a Priest who understood the liturgy in his mother tongue, or who could translate the easiest piece of Latin; and that from the Thames to the sea, the Ecclesiastics were still more ignorant: *Asserus de rebus gestis Alfredi, ap. Camdeni Anglica, &c.* p. 25. The ignorance of the Clergy is equally described by an author of the dark ages: 'POTIUS DEDIT GULAM QUAM GLOSAM; POTIUS COLLIGUNT LIBRAS QUAM LEGUNT LIBROS, LIBENTIUS INTUENTUR MARTIAM QUAM MARCUM; MALUNT LEGERE IN SALMONS QUAM IN SOLOMONS.' *Alanus de Art. Prædicator. ap. Lebeuf. Dissert.* tom. 2. p. 91. There still remain several Manuscripts of the eighth, ninth, and following centuries, written on parchment, from which

we may safely say, that but for universities, and in the 18th century, the election of the order of Jesuits, the Roman Catholic Church must have been left with scarcely any pretensions to a literary reputation.

But there are other views of Monachism, which our opponent compels us briefly to notice. Dismissing the celibacy and literature of the Monks. We are invited to consider their Hospitality—their property in the land,—what is almost unintelligibly called their “fixedness”,—the resource they provided for the younger children of the Aristocracy, and finally the important effects of their institutions, on the mere face of the country. Their hospitality we fear is greatly overrated. But even if we allow, that they were uniformly kind and munificent to the poor, who solicited their charity, it is a feeble argument for their support; for they were enriched by the severest exactions for this purpose—they levied heavy contributions on, even, the stock of the peasant who lived under their walls,—and especially, in the great political bearing of their establishment, they encouraged idleness in their dependants, and augmented pauperism and crime by the sanctuary

some former writing had been erased, in order to substitute a new composition in its place. A book of Livy or of Tacitus might be erased, to make room for the legendary tale of a saint, or the superstitious prayers of a missal. Murat. Antiq. Ital. Vol. 3. p. 633. P. de Montfaucon affirms, that the greater part of the Manuscripts on parchment which he has seen; those of ancient date excepted, are written on parchment from which some former treatise has been erased. Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscrip. tom. 9. p. 325.”

“Many circumstances prove the scarcity of books during these ages. Private persons seldom possessed any books whatever. Even Monasteries of considerable note had only one missal. Murat. Antiq. Vol. 9. p. 789. Lupus, Abbot of Ferrières, in a letter to the Pope, A. D. 835, beseeches him to lend him a copy of Cicero de Oratore, and Quæstiones Insuperiores; “for,” says he, “although we have parts of these books, there is no complete copy of them in all France.” Murat Antiq. Vol. 8. p. 235.” “When any person made a present of a book to a Church or a Monastery, in which were the only libraries during several ages, it was deemed a donation of such value, that he offered it on the Altar, and immolated ANTIMON, in order to obtain forgiveness of his sins. Murat. Vol. 3. p. 636, &c. &c. (Chas. s. Vol. 4. Note 36.

they were accustomed to afford to men, whom it was the policy of the law to punish and repress. In addition to this, Cobbett reminds us, "that we are to look at the Monks and Nuns in the important capacity of *Landlords & Landladies*." In this connection we are informed, that the revenues they collected from the people were expended among them, and that the yoke was easy, which in this respect, they put on the obsequious peasantry. But from the nature and history of the case, we maintain, that the expenditure of Monasteries could be of little importance to the improvement of the nation. In fact, it was altogether insignificant. Fed by the blind devotion of the people, they impoverished their dependants in enriching themselves. What channels did they open for the circulation of wealth? Were not their gains laid up in coffers, or did they not consist in the costly adornments of their shrines, and in splendid vessels of silver and gold?—They kept the people stationary at best. Manufactures, Trade and Commerce, were impeded by their influence. Avaricious of the gifts they demanded at their shrines and altars, and in the authority which the fiction of Purgatory gave them over the fears and property of the multitude, they could do no other, than place their rents on terms comparatively easy.—After this we are told that "the Monastery was a proprietor that *never died*—its tenantry had to do with a deathless landlord"—and that this "fixedness" is "the friend of rectitude in morals," and "powerfully conduces to prosperity private and public." All which might be allowed to be conclusive reasoning, if we could believe, that it were a blessing to be bound in the spell of barbarism and superstition, but the facts before our readers prove that the destruction of this spell,—the overthrow of this tyrant of centuries—amidst all modern changes, has called the elements of our improvement into brisk and wholesome circulation. Having little room to enlarge in this place, we may leave the influence of Monachism on the preservation of an Aristocracy to a

subsequent number ; when in examining the general relations of Popery to Liberty, we shall, perhaps, have occasion to notice it. In concluding, however, we may just allude to the important effects of this institution on the *aspect* of the country. Cobbett's paragraph on this subject is one of the most amusing he has written, and must we imagine, have been penned by him in an hour of merriment; when he was excessively disposed to sport with that credulity in his readers, on which he has calculated so largely. We have in the first place, a servid appeal to patriotism on behalf of the *structures, gardens, and fish-ponds*, of the Monks! We have their ruins thrown widely around us, and when we are supposed to be "chained to the spot by melancholy musings," we have the voice of the screech-owl finely contrasted with the vespers of the Monk; and finally, the excess of old English hospitality, opposed to the slender accommodations of a modern inn! Now this it must be acknowledged is very picturesque—very poetical—very sentimental—and how such a man as Cobbett could be betrayed into the composition of such a passage, we are at a loss to conceive, unless we resort to our former supposition, that he is all along in jest. We know that the associations, which the relics of former generations awaken in the mind, are sometimes the most powerful and mournfully impressive; but we also know that they are calculated to produce a momentary illusion, by which, in the mist of time, objects worthless in themselves, become dilated in magnitude, and imposing in effect. The ruins of heathen temples, and the grey-worn battlements of feudal tyranny, have the same tendency; while to appeal to this, in any degree, in the search of truth, betrays a want of argument; and implies that destitution of principle, in consequence of which, a man is ready to avail himself of prejudices, however absurd or dishonourable.

THE
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NO. VIII.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24.

THE *Reformation* of England is uniformly called by Cobbett the *devastation*, and if we confide in his accuracy, we must consider it to have spread, like war or pestilence, from one extremity of the kingdom to the other; plundering the property, demolishing the habitations, and enfeebling and emaciating the bodies of men. To any one however, curious in ascertaining the relation of cause and effect, it must occasion some surprise, that the history of this devastation chiefly belongs to the suppression of Monasteries; the vices of which constituted the virtue of the nation, and their plunder its wealth. We have already taken a view of these institutions, in relation to the general interests of Literature and Religion, and the dependance of the multitude upon them; and nothing we believe may be more confidently asserted, than that they were religious corruptions, and political nuisances; standing in the way of all sacred improvement, and constraining the people within the vassalage of any power, to which they happened to be allied. We have already repeatedly observed that the value of the *Reformation* is to be estimated by the importance of the Religious changes it produced; and though

as a political event, it might have been procured by measures on the part of the King and his Ministers which we should condemn, the credit of Protestantism as a system of faith and practice is not in the least injured, nor the abominations of Popery in the lowest degree excused. These observations are important in their particular application to the suppression of Monasteries. As the bulwarks of Papal power, and as tending to the preservation and increase of Religious abuses, their destruction must have been desired by every good and enlightened man ; and though the love of wealth may have occasioned the activity of many agents in their suppression, it is not to be regretted on this account. We do not deny that the desire of aggrandisement hastened their fate, since personal considerations are often mingled with political motives ; but we maintain, that as a measure of state, it was justifiable and necessary, giving to sincere Protestants, the advantage of that support, which proceeded upon the wisdom of political calculations. Henry's encouragement of the Reformation was always measured by the dread of Papal encroachment on his own authority, and no one can deny that, in this respect, he had reason to fear the influence of six or seven hundred Monasteries. So that as a part of our civil History the affair is to be viewed on higher ground than that on which Cobbett has placed it ; and as in the case of Hume, has been considered a happy event, by men uninterested in the purity of Religion. Here if we had met with Cobbett on the field of reason, we might leave the subject, or upon this view of it exclusively dwell ; but since this hero on every occasion, hurries into the mazes of passion—since he seldom gives us an argument to answer, but a prejudice to destroy—it will be necessary, though in as brief a space as possible, to examine his representation of the history of the case ; and in no part of his undertaking, we will engage ourselves fairly to show, has he reasoned more inconclusively—represented persons and things more dishonestly—contradicted ;

himself more absurdly—and insulted the common sagacity of his readers more grossly, than in this place.

Prone to personal abuse, it could not be expected, that he would spare the character of THOMAS CROMWELL, Earl of Essex, the chief instrument employed by Henry in the suppression of Monasteries. And though we do not think it necessary to attempt a vindication of this Statesman's public conduct, we may be allowed to notice the manner in which Cobbett exhibits him to detestation. He repeatedly mentions the meanness of his origin,—having been the son of a blacksmith—and introduces him by the periphrasis of the "brutal blacksmith"—"the vicegerent blacksmith"—as though infamy belonged to him on account of his parentage, and his accuser were ennobled by "all the blood of all the Howards." But this parentage is not all that might have been made to disgrace him: why did not Cobbett tell us of his early career, when he was a soldier in the ranks abroad? This would have completed the evidence for the unsuitness of the rank he subsequently obtained; and might easily have been made to point the declamatory charges of his "ruffian" character; and have been wrought into a pretty antithesis to Fox's unfortunate description of him as "the valiant soldier of the Reformation." Cobbett's recollection of his own station in the ranks, cannot be supposed to have prevented these remarks, since he is so unsparing in taunting the Earl with the epithet of the "Blacksmith;" and in a former number derides a London Society for appointing a wine and spirit merchant its treasurer; besides, to abuse another for what once belonged to himself, would not be singular in the review of his political career. But passing this, what reason is there for asserting that Cromwell was ungrateful and treacherous to his early benefactor? Yet it is said, "He had been an underling of some sort in the family of Cardinal Wolsey, and had recommended himself to the King by his sycophancy to him, and his treachery to his

old master." (Let. 5. § 167.) Cobbett could not have been ignorant that every historian has given a contradictory account of the matter. For when a series of charges was preferred against the Cardinal in the House of Commons, Cromwell stood prominently in his defence, and saved him for the time.* The generosity of feeling and decision of character which he displayed on this occasion, laid the foundation of his reputation; and have always been supposed to have secured the favour of the capricious Monarch, who often admired and rewarded virtue in others, when not formidable to himself. But leaving conjecture on the influence on the fact, we cannot repress indignation at the unprincipled affront, with which Cobbett has stated the contrary, without the mention of a single circumstance, or reference to a single authority in his support. Thus it is, that this man defies the record of history, broadly makes the most controvertible and unfounded statements, and erects upon falsehoods, the enormity of which he scarcely attempts to qualify or conceal, the superstructure of his impiety and imposture. So baseless is his fabric, and so unsupported his positions, that as soon as his "Reformation" is fairly before the public, we may confidently calculate on its consignment to infamy. When men of the least information, or reflection, have had an opportunity to examine it, its readers will be made to feel ashamed of it; for any dependance on it, as a history, will imply the grossest ignorance, or basest principle on their part. The manner in which Cobbett mentions the attainder and execution of Cromwell, is worth our observation, as the result of that infuriated temper, into which party zeal, and attachment to a bad cause are certain to plunge a man. He reviews this event with complacency and triumph, and pronounces on its justice. And the sole reason for his exultation in the misfortunes of this Nobleman, is his attachment to the

* Rapin. B. 15.

Burnet. Vol. 1. p. 81.

Reformation; as if the murder of Protestant leaders were sure to find an advocate in this writer. The circumstances of Cromwell's fate reflect indelible disgrace on the Roman Catholics of his time, for his credit with the King was laboriously destroyed by the Catholic Duke of Norfolk, and Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester; and he was, in fact, surrendered as a peace offering to their vengeance, whom his inconstant master was at this period anxious to conciliate. Heresy, and Treason in support of Heresy, formed the substance of the charges against him; yet Cobbett himself says, "He was no more a heretic than the King was, and as to the charge of treason, there was not a shadow of foundation for it." (Let. 6. § 189) Nay, he assures us, that one reason for his death, compassed, let it be observed, by Norfolk and Gardiner, was to gain possession of his plunder. Yet with all this before him, he represents the Roman Catholics as immaculate, and exults in the death of their victim as just, and gratifying to his own resentments. What is said in such a connection, on the cruelty of dispossessing Monks and Nuns of their dwellings, must be considered as the result of that blinding and deforming bigotry, which contending for far more than justice to one party, would destroy, though with fire and sword, every vestige of the other. To find the materials of ferocious delight in the death of such men as Cromwell and Cranmer, may agree with the entire subjection of the heart to Popery, but will inspire with an abhorrence of its principles, and in the present instance, contempt for its agency.

Cobbett dwells repeatedly, and at length, on the suppression of Monasteries, as a gross violation of the law of the land. Hence we are told of a breach of Magna Charta, and of robbery; while the agents of this work are consistently characterised as "ruffians" and "villains." Nay in one place we are expressly told that it was "an act of sheer tyranny"—"a pure Algerine proceeding at last." (Let. 5. § 163.) Now it is full as plain as any of Cobbett's own truisms,

that those measures which had the sanction of the highest legal authority in the kingdom, could not be illegal; or in other words, that what was performed by act of Parliament, could not be a pure Algerine proceeding. Yet in support of the legality of the measure in question, we need not go farther than the pages of this careful writer; and prove the unfounded nature of his most important assertions, from the letter which contains them. In the first place he informs us of the *visitation*, which was duly appointed; and whoever will take the trouble to examine the articles of enquiry, arranged for this business, will perceive that where Monasteries had not violated the design and rule of their order, there was no pretence for their suppression. Upon this visitation, reports of their actual condition were made, and on the truth of these reports, the reason for subsequent measures was rested. Cobbett himself tells us, that "they met with no contradiction." (Let. 5. § 160.) And though the Monks had contrived among the Populace, the Clergy, the Nobility, and in Parliament; though on account of their exemption from the general prevalence of vice, certain houses were excepted from ruin; we are required to believe that these reports were untrue. Against their accuracy, no presumption exists, but the unfavourable nature of their testimony to the Monks; and since Cobbett has suggested no other, he has left us in controversy with himself, to build most confidently on their correctness. An Act of Parliament was obtained, 1536, for the suppression of the lesser Monasteries; and 1539, another act for the suppression of the greater. (Let. 5. § 162. Let. 6. § 172.) Does this remind the reader of Algiers? Does this warrant the charge of illegality? Yet with all this written in his own pages, and having expressly stated the existence of a "*legal form*" (Let. 6. § 166), he absurdly adds, "Tyrants have often committed robberies on their people; but, in all cases but this, in England at least, there was always something of *legal process* observed. In this case there

was no such thing." (Let. 6. § 174.) Here in one paragraph he admits that there was a *legal form*, and five or six paragraphs onwards, affirms that there was no *legal process*! To reason with a man who thus contradicts himself for the sake of imposing on the unwary by strong language, would be a degradation; and our readers we are persuaded, would feel themselves insulted, by any attempt on our part, to make the absurdities of this writer more palpable than they appear in his own pages. As easily as every one perceives that those measures which took a legal form, were not without a legal process, so easily must they discover and despise the shallowness of this pretender. If to escape the shame which his readers have already decreed him, he should remind us of the baseness of the Parliament, and the injustice and tyranny of their measures; we reply that he has not addressed himself to this point, and that as long as the old distinction of terms and ideas is preserved—as long as the proceedings of Parliament are law, and their enactments, however unjustifiable on general principles of equity, *legal processes*—he has contradicted himself in the career of his intemperance. Neither ought this contradiction to be considered trifling, for his deliberate design was obviously to impress his readers with the conviction, that in the case of Monasteries, the tyranny of Henry despised the form of law. This he has repeated in the most explicit language it was possible for him to employ, confidently calculating on the indignation it would awaken; when, at the same time, he has no less explicitly denied it, trusting to the stupidity of his readers, for an exemption from the shame to which he has so openly exposed himself. If Cobbett had chosen to reason against the suppression of Monasteries as politically or morally unjust, a fair field would have been opened for that reasoning, which would have brought the merits of the case into view; but he knew too well the nature of the cause he had undertaken to attempt this; and has therefore resorted to the more easy, but the

base and dishonourable mode of deceiving the inattentive by the cry of devastation and robbery; and since he could not prove moral injustice, to charge illegality, while the admission of the contrary, stands under his own hand.—He was evidently embarrassed by the necessity of throwing odium on this event in the History of our Reformation, and unaccustomed to measure his abuse by considerations of merit, or the suggestions of reason, has overstepped the bounds he had involuntarily drawn around him. Never did Romish Priest practise on the credulity of ignorance by his farcical exhibition of relics, with greater impudence, than Cobbett has displayed throughout his miscalled history.

Popular insurrections were connected with the suppression of Monasteries, in which Abbots and Monks were often the most active agents; inflaming by their complaints, and assisting by their wealth, the discontented multitude. The Prior of Woburn, the Abbot of Whalley, the Abbot of Gervaux, the Abbot and the Prior of Sawley, the Prior of Burlington, the Abbot of Glastonbury, and the Abbot of Colchester, were on this account attainted of high treason, and executed accordingly. Cobbett, however, speaks of these executions as plotted by Cromwell and his agents wherever they could not obtain voluntary surrenders. “Where (he says) those unjust and sanguinary men met with sturdy opposition, they resorted to false accusations, and procured the murder of the parties, under pretence of their having committed *high treason*. It was under this infamous pretence that the tyrant hanged and ripped up and quartered the Abbot of the famous Abbey of Glastonbury, whose body was mangled by the executioner, and whose head and limbs were hung up in what is called the *torre*, which overlooks the Abbey. So that the *surrender* whenever it did take place, was precisely of the nature of those ‘voluntary surrenders’ which men make of their purses, when the robber’s pistol is at their temple, or his blood-stained knife at their throat.” (Let. 6, § 17E.)—

Here it should be recollected that the *voluntary* surrenders of which we speak, were made previous to the act of suppression.* When this act was passed, the possession of Monasteries could only be retained by rebellion. To state therefore, as Cobbett has done, that where voluntary surrenders were not made, it was Cromwell's custom to accuse of high treason; is to overlook the act of rebellion on which such accusations were founded, and studiously keeping the facts of the case out of sight, to misrepresent the whole affair. The Abbot of Glastonbury, whom he particularly mentions, as having been executed on the charge of high-treason, was convicted of having stolen the plate from his Monastery, and sending it to the rebels at that time in arms.

The *plunder* of Monasteries may have been overrated, but be this as it may, we think, that however great their wealth was, it would be difficult to prove it, in any sense, a national advantage. Cobbett's design always leads him to use the language of exaggeration on this head. "Never (he says) in all probability, since the world began, was there so rich a harvest of plunder." Monasteries, in fact, created a monopoly of wealth. Enriched by grants which men of great crimes, and mean superstition, often made in their dying moments, they impoverished many noble families. And standing between the aristocracy and multitude, reduced the latter to a most dependant and beggared state. Hence, with their daily and successful activity in the increase of wealth, it becomes a question of great practical moment in this controversy, how far it circulated through the land? Did they ever form a medium for its circulation from one class to another, encouraging enterprize in trade and commerce, and thus fostering all the arts which improve Society. And though their tables may have been wellspread, and open to all descriptions of visitors, were any funds or charities instituted by them, calculated

* Burnet, Vol. i. 191.

to remove the causes of that distress, to which they afforded the temporary relief of a meal and a verbal benediction? Were not the gold and silver they obtained, hoarded for the miserly gratification of their avarice, or splendidly exhibited for the inconsistent purpose of worldly ostentation? Unless it can be proved that the institutions of the Monks were calculated to raise the character, and multiply the resources of their dependants, their wealth was a curse, in proportion to its magnitude.†

Some conception of the nature of this plunder, and the consequent enormity of the transaction, may be formed from Cobbett's own statements. "*The poorest of the Convents*

† The following is a list copied from a little work, published recently in Manchester by a Romish Priest. Speaking of the suppression of Religious Houses by Henry VIII. he says "Here I will name a few of the principal Monasteries with their yearly revenues, which at the present day would be worth at least five or six times as much, or more, that were robbed, thieved, and plundered by the piety of Protestants:—"

Monasteries.	Orders.	Yearly Revenues.		
		£.	s.	d.
186....	Benedictines	61,877	14	0
20.....	Cluniacs	4,972	9	2½
9.....	Carthusians	2,947	14	4½
101.....	Cisterians	18,691	12	6
173.....	Austins	33,027	1	11
32.....	Premonstratensians	4,807	14	1
25.....	Gilbertines	2,421	13	9
3.....	Fontevrand Nuns	894	8	6½
3.....	Minorcuses	549	10	6
1.....	Brigettines	1,731	8	9½
2.....	Bonhommes	660	5	11½
.....	Knights Hospitallers	5,395	6	5½
.....	Friars	809	11	8½

£142,914 12 9½

"A sure way to find out the True Religion," &c. by the late Rev. T. Baddley, p. 28.

(he says) had some images, vases, and other things of gold or silver. *Many of them possessed a great deal in this way.* The altars of their Churches were generally enriched with the precious metals, if not with costly jewels," &c. The covers of books, he afterwards tells us, were ornamented with the precious metals. And by way of exposing the rapacity of Henry, he shows us in what the glory of Monasteries was made to consist. "Amongst the stock (he says) of this 'generous Prince's' pawnbroker's shop; or, rather, his store house of stolen goods, were images of all sorts, candlesticks, sockets, crucets, cups, pixes, goblets, basins, spoons, diamonds, sapphires, pearls, finger-rings, ear-rings, pieces of money of all values, even down to shillings, bits of gold and silver torn from the covers of books, or cut and beaten out of the altars. In cases where the wood work, either of altars, crosses, or images, was inlaid with precious metal, the wood was frequently burnt to get at the metal." (Let. 6. § 174, 175, 177.) In reading such passages as these, intended to reflect disgrace on Henry and his Ministers, by the imputation of covetousness, we are naturally led to observe, that this accumulation of costly ornaments was inconsistent with the severity of Monastic rules—that wealth thus appropriated, or thus hoarded, from age to age, was lost to any good end,—and that many of the articles here specified, imply a splendid and luxurious mode of living, inconsistent, with even a low degree of piety, or sobriety of character. The greater part it should also be recollected of the wealth of Monasteries, was not obtained by a fair farming of their lands to the industrious peasantry, but by their superstitions; wringing from the ignorant, what was often necessary to their comfort. If their excessive affluence had been the result of honourable demands—the reward of "easy landlords"—it would not be so much the subject of reproach, as it becomes, when we look into the artifices by which it was procured. At the time of the suppression—rents paid to Monasteries were in general low, and this, as we

have seen, is a subject of panegyric with Cobbett; but it should be observed, that these rents had been placed low, that the Monks might have an opportunity to enrich themselves by exorbitant fines; the rents belonging to the recorded income of the Monastery, but fines being more capable of mal-appropriations. And this does not appear to have been a method, resorted to merely when Henry had driven them to an extremity, but to have been long and frequently employed for the sake of escaping those obligations to hospitality and benevolence, which a large income, by the farming of their lands, placed upon them. † The fiction of purgatory, to which we have repeatedly referred, and the custom of performing masses for the dead, proved the most lucrative impositions. When we reflect that the gain of this superstition was in proportion to the ravages of mortality, and the property of survivors, our surprise at Monkish affluence will cease, and contempt and indignation be awakened in its place. In connection with this period of our history, the *Mendicant Friars* ought not to be forgotten. They had been multiplying in numbers and crimes from the twelfth century. Itinerating through the country, and subsisting by their demands on every family they entered, they formed an army of *paupers* of the worst description, and in equal proportion, exhausted the resources, and augmented the vices of the people. §

† Rapin. B. 15. Burnet. Vol. 1. p. 183.

§ At the period to which our history refers, an amusing paper was widely circulated through the Kingdom, entitled "The Very Beggars Petition against Popery; wherein they humbly complain to King Henry the Eighth of the Clergy." An extract may not be uninteresting to the reader, showing him the manner, in which many persons were accustomed to speak of Monasteries and Monks, when they existed before their eyes. After speaking of the neglect and starvation to which the "bedemen" were left, the Petition says, "And this most pestilent mischief is come upon your said poor bedemen, by the reason that there is (in the times of your noble predecessors passed) craftily crept into this your realm another sort (not of impotent but) of strong, puissant, and counterfeit-holy, and idle beggars, and vagabonds."

The wealth of Monasteries, however, not only furnishes a rule by which we may compute the servile superstition of the people ; it must also be viewed as the fruit of the vilest chicanery, by which simplicity was ever duped. There was first the mechanical construction of images, by which the ignorant worshippers were beguiled into the belief, that such devices were often animated from heaven, in gracious condescension to their prayers, and acceptance of their gifts. In addition to this, the exhibition of relics, was such as must inspire us with adhorrence of the institutions, for whose support they were thought necessary. - Besides the general falsehood of

which, since the time of their first entry, by all the craft and williness of Satan, are now increased under your sight, not only into a great number, but also into a kingdom.

" These are not the herds (or sheep) but the ravenous wolves, going in herds-clothing, devouring the flock ; the bishops, abbots, priors, deacons, archdeacons, suffragans, priests, monks, canons, friars, pardoners, and somners ; and who is able to number this idle, ravenous sort, which (setting all labour aside) have begged so importunately that they have gotten into their hands more than the third part of all your realm : the goodliest lordships, manors, lands, and territories are theirs. Besides this, they have the tenth part of all the corn, meadow, pasture, grass, wool, colts, calves, lambs, pigs, geese, and chickens. Over and besides the tenth part of every servant's wages, the tenth part of the wool, milk, honey, wax, cheese, and butter ; Yes, and they look so narrowly upon their profits, that the poor wives must be accountable to them for every tenth egg, or else she getteth not her rights at Easter, shall be taken as an heretick ; hereto have they their four offering-days.

" What money pull they in by probates of testaments, privy tithes, and by men's offerings to their pilgrimages, and at their first masses. Every man and child that is buried must pay somewhat for masses and dirges to be sung for him, or else they will accuse the dead man's friends and executors of heresy. What money get they by mortuaries, by hearing of confessions (and yet they will keep thereof no counsel) by hallowing of churches, altars, super-altars, chapels, and bells, by cursing of men, and absolving them again for money.

" What multitude of money gather the pardoners in a year ? How much money get the somners (i. e. parators) by extortion in a year ? By citing the people to the commissaries court, and afterwards releasing the appearance for money. Finally, the infinite number of beggars-friars, what get they in a year ?

" Here, if it please your Grace to mark, ye shall see a thing far out of

their pretensions, the same thing was exhibited in different places at once—trifles, if real, the most contemptible, invited the profoundest veneration—while, in many instances, subjects the most offensive to decency, were found to advance the credit of certain houses.} How inassurable must we be, to the value of knowledge and independence, if we can respect these artifices as honourable or religious; or rather, in any degree, the outcry of plunder, to awaken regret at their extinction?

Joint: there are within your realm of England, fifty-two thousand parish-churches; and this standing, that there be but ten households in every parish, yet are there five hundred thousand, and twenty thousand households: and of every of these households hath every of the five orders of friars a penny a quarter for every order, that is, for all the five orders five pence a quarter for every house; that is, for all the five orders twenty pence a year for every house; SUMMA, five hundred thousand, and twenty thousand quarters of angels; that is, two hundred and sixty thousand half angels; SUMMA, one hundred and thirty thousand angels; SUMMA TOTALIS, forty-four thousand pounds, and three hundred and thirty-three pounds, six shillings, and eight-pence sterling; whereof, not four hundred years passed, they had not one penny. Oh grievous and painful exactions! thus yearly to be paid, from the which the people of your noble predecessors, the kings of the ancient Britons, ever stood free.

"And this will they have, or else they will procure him that will not give it them to be taken as an heretick. . . What tyrant ever oppressed the people like this cruel and vengeable generation? What subjects shall be able to help their Prince, that be after this fashion yearly polled? What good Christian people can be able to succour us poor lepers, blind, sore, and lame, that be thus yearly oppressed? Is it any marvel that your people so complain of poverty? Is it any marvel that the taxes, fifteenths, and subsidies, that your Grace, most tenderly of great compassion, hath taken among your people, to defend them from the threatened ruin of their common-wealth, have been so slothfully, yea painfully, levied? Seeing that almost the uttermost penny that might have been levied, hath been gathered before, verily by this ravenous, cruel, and insatiable generation." Harleian Mss. Vol. 1.

} A crucifix, called "the Rood of Grace," had long performed marvels at Boxley, in Kent. To this wonder-working machine multitudes resorted, and when the image was observed to bow, move its limbs, open its lips, roll its eyes, or bend its brow, they were agitated with all the interest, which a conviction of divine power miraculously operating in their view, might be supposed to occasion. This "Rood of Grace," was, however, broken at St. Paul's Cross in London, and the springs publicly shown, by which hundreds had been frequently and awfully deluded.

What is said on the demolition of the tombs of Austin and Alfred, and especially on the enormity of plundering the shrine of Becket, is fully answered by our remarks on the iniquity of Monastic influence and wealth. For supposing the demolition of Austin's or Alfred's tomb were censurable—betraying a want of respect for the memory of men who ought not be numbered with the degenerate mass of their posterity—this will never prove that Monasteries were a blessing, and their riches the cure of every political evil. But the truth is, that, however, our prejudices may be roused in defence of these tombs, they were little respected by Roman Catholics themselves, at the period to which Cobbett refers. Veneration for the memory of a virtuous and enlightened Monarch, or even of the founder of their Church in Britain, was lost in the ardour of their devotion at the shrine of the most execrable of men. It was the plunder of Becket's shrine which formed the most offensive article in the whole list of Henry's confiscations. The reputation of this mis-called Saint, was injurious to the credit of the King's supremacy, and the turbulent ambition by which he purchased his death and canonization, ought to jus-

At Hales, in Gloucestershire, the blood of Christ was exhibited in a phial, which blood, however, could not be seen by the applicant, till the richness of his gifts purchased him the privilege of beholding it. The occasions of its appearance and disappearance to different persons, or to the same persons at different times, were of course, considered divine intimations of their safety before God. But the blood was afterwards proved to be that of a fowl regularly changed; and the phial which contained it, transparent on one side, and dense on the other! As long as hope remained of extorting money from the Pilgrim the dark side was shown, but when the rapacity of his instructor was satisfied, he was rewarded with a view of the transparent side.

At Reading, an Angel with one wing was found, who brought over the head of the spear which pierced the Saviour's side! At St. Edmondsbury, the coals which roasted St. Lawrence, the parings of St. Edmund's toes, St. Thomas a Becket's penknife and boots, and as many pieces of the cross, as alone might have made an entire one of large dimensions! Besides which we may mention, THREE heads of St. Ursula, our Lady's Girdle in SILVER plates, Malchus's ear, and a piece of St. Andrews' finger, set in silver, so highly valued as to have been pledged for forty pence! Herbert, p. 213. *Becket*, Vol. 1, p. 262.

tify the Monarch's resentment to every friend of freedom. The splendour and immense treasures of his shrine, must have been regretted by every pious mind, for who could have seen pilgrims, by thousands, substituting their prostrations and offerings there, in place of the least regard to their God and Saviour? It is amusing to observe how Cobbett not content with the homage once paid him, endeavours to soothe his admirers by the assurance that, "the English nation has always continued to be just and grateful to the memory of this celebrated man,"—because though in consequence of the King's prohibition his name was not recorded in the calendar of the Common Prayer Book—we find it in MOORE'S ALMANACK for this very year!! (Let. 6. § 179). How pitiful the recompence of this ambitious Prelate! To be chronicled in Moore's Almanack, and eulogised by Cobbett are honours of equal worth, and fully proportioned to the merits of the subject.

From the accounts, which Roman Catholics themselves have seldom been anxious to qualify, of the immense treasures amassed by their superstitions, we infer the immense expence of Popery to its friends, through all gradations of society, down to the meanest labourer. But the consideration of this topic must be deferred.

¶ A hundred thousand Pilgrims, are said to have been assembled at one time in Canterbury, drawn thither by Becket's reputation! To observe the channel in which their devotion flowed is full of instruction on the nature of their sanctity. There were three great Altars, respectively dedicated to Christ, the Virgin, and St. Thomas. One year there were offered at

Christ's Altar L 3 2 6

Virgin's L 63 5 6

St. Thomas's L 832 12 3

But the next year the difference was more remarkable, for there were offered at

Christ's Altar L 0 0 0

Virgin's L 4 1 8

St. Thomas's L 94 6 3

Somer's Antiq. of Can. Burnet, Vol. I. 284.

J. FLETCHER, PRINTER, CHESTER.

THE PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. IX.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19.

THE reign of Edward VI. was that of our first Protestant Prince. Deeply imbued with an aversion to the Roman Catholic Religion, this youthful Monarch possessed no ordinary zeal, prompted by the most unfainted sincerity of motive. But it was his infelicity to ascend the throne when the Reformation was still unsettled; and the animosities of political parties were ready to display themselves on every occasion, which the Religious disputations of the day afforded. In these unhappy and novel circumstances, he wanted the experience of age, and that authority, which matured years alone, can give to the King of a turbulent and zealous people. Having his minority placed by the will of his father, under the direction of sixteen executors, including both Nobility and Clergy—Protestants, and Roman Catholics—the infelicity of his situation was greatly augmented by the confusion of sentiment, and contrariety of design, which prevailed among his advisers. They had separate and conflicting interests of their own to advance; and influenced by bigotry in Religion; or that “vaulting ambition” which disdains with equal inconsideration both the forms and principles of Religion, they were

constantly plotting the subversion of each other, and thereby endangered the credit of whatever system they chose publicly to defend. Cranmer, happily for the interests of pure Christianity, was one of the executors; and while every dictate of prudence obliged him, in some degree, to accommodate himself to the overwhelming influence of others, he stood equally as a check on the intemperance of his own party, and an obstacle disappointing by his wisdom, and awing by his virtue, the intolerant abettors of Popery. The ascension of Edward, was universally considered an advantage to Protestantism, whose friends anticipated the repeal of restrictive and penal statutes, and by the removal of images, and the abolition of the mass in particular, greater simplicity in the services of the Church. These anticipations were likely to be realized, since the Protector, appointed as the representative of Majesty, was decidedly friendly to their wishes; and since, aided by the judgment and moderation of Cranmer, his measures were as much calculated to conciliate, as duty and conscience could allow. Gardiner, at this period, stood forward with great intrepidity; and what may appear to Cobbett's readers, surprising in this celebrated enemy of the Reformation, rested his cause, chiefly, on an appeal to the prejudices of the people, in favor of the late King's learning and piety! He, therefore, contended for the justice of deferring every innovation in Religion, *as Henry left it*, till, at least, the young King should attain to the free exercise of his regal power.

The fate which has attended the memory of Henry VIII. in the estimation of Roman Catholics themselves, is curious and instructive. In the early part of his reign, he was the favourite of the Pope, and as the royal champion of its tenets in opposition to Luther, the idol of the Romish Church. Flattered as a paragon of learning and piety—constantly compared to Solomon for his wisdom—and solemnly invested with the envied designation of “Defender of the Faith”—he

became an object of veneration to his superstitious subjects, which his subsequent opposition to the Pope was unable to expel from their minds. In the prosecution of his divorce from Catherine, to which Cobbett, as we have seen, triumphantly traces the Reformation, he was first countenanced by the Pope—cheered by the general voice of the Church throughout Europe—assisted by his own Romish Clergy in particular, among whom Gardiner and Bonner, the bitterest persecutors of Protestants, performed their parts, with the vilest subservience to his unholy wishes. And though the progress of truth in the nation, and his own energy of disposition, led him farther than these men advised, his supremacy, the grand feature of his heresy and schism in the sight of Rome, was defended even by them! (Let. 8, § 227). When Edward and Elizabeth adopted more decided measures, Roman Catholics, beholding their glory rapidly fading away, were accustomed to look back on this heretical Monarch, as the honour of their falling cause; pleading the authority of his judgment, and the obligations of his laws, as objections to Protestant innovation. Their incantations then made his memory serve for their support; but now, since the light of the Reformation has destroyed the superstitious veneration in which he was held, they have changed with the prejudices of the time, and doom the ancient idol of their folly, to the indignity of their baseness. When, therefore, we hear the vices of Henry charged on the Reformation, and this event loaded with all the opprobrium which honour and piety can ever cast upon him; we ought not to repress our indignation at the disingenuousness, inconsistency, and duplicity of such conduct. Let his “*fame*” stand “*the gibbet of his name*,” and he will always be suspended to the execration of the world, as a warning to Protestants against Popery; who will not fail to remember that he was once the idol of those who now persecute his memory and censure him with unsparing rigour, for the purpose of saving the credit, which they formerly offered at his shrine.

The manner in which Cobbett opens and condenses the history of Edward, in all the specious and formidable array of seven terrifying acts, is censurable on account of its flippancy and inaccuracy; devoid of every thing except that point of expression, which, however false in its import, is frequently effective in its impression on the credulous. Speaking of the Council or Executors appointed by Henry, he says, "These sixteen worthies, began by taking, in the most solemn manner, an oath to stand to, and maintain the last will of their master. Their second act was to break that oath, by making Hertford, who was a brother of Jane Seymour, the King's mother, "*Protector*," though the will gave equal powers to all the executors. Their next step was to give new Peerages to some of themselves. The fourth, to award to the new Peers grants of the public money. The fifth, was to lay aside, at the Coronation, the ancient English custom of *asking the people if they were willing to have and obey the King*. The sixth, was to attend at a solemn High Mass. And the seventh, was to begin a series of acts for the total subversion of all that remained of the Catholic Religion in England, and for the effecting of all that old Henry had left unaffected in the way of *plunder*." (Let. 7, § 185.)—The first act was a matter of course, and the second, no violation of any express rule. The Executors were under the general obligation "to administer the affairs of the kingdom as they should judge fit,"* To imagine that they ought to have preferred the letter of Henry's will, to such measures as circumstances rendered necessary, is to impute to them a subserviency utterly inconsistent with their duty to the nation. The creation of new Peers was but a fulfilment of the well-known purpose of Henry, interrupted by the scruples of some of the parties, and chiefly by the sickness which terminated in his death. The grant of money to the new Peers was a necessary consequence of the preceding act,

* Rapin, B. 31.

and nothing but just on the performance of that. But when Cobbett speaks of this grant as being "*public money*," and in his following paragraphs, describes the Protestant zeal of Cranmer and others, as manifesting itself in a new attack on the property of the Church, particularly in Chantries, &c. he omits to state, that it was this attack, made from another quarter, which was the expedient resorted to for supporting the new Peers; in addition we may observe, that these Chantries instead of being "*public money*," are afterwards described by him, as "*private property to all intents and purposes*."—(Let. 7, § 202)—The omission of the ancient custom of asking the consent of the people to the authority of the King, is stated unfairly and falsely, since, in fact, *the question was not omitted*, but merely altered in its form.† Another act of the Executors, was to attend at a solemn High Mass; but why, if this be true, should it be recorded as a crime, when their opposition to Popery is the subject of reprehension? Then, in addition to these six particulars, Cobbett, with great sagacity, adds a seventh, which was the commencement of a series of acts for "*the total subversion*" of the Roman Catholic Religion. To charge this on the Executors as a body, is absurdly false, since some of them were deeply interested in the preservation of this Religion; while to record it as a charge against the Protestant leaders themselves, is puerile in the extreme, because the merits of their cause form the subject in dispute; and is, in

† "The King's Majesty's Coronation should be done and celebrated upon
 " **SUNDAY** next ensuing, in the Cathedral Church of WESTMINSTER,
 " after the form and order ensuing:—**FIRST**, the Archbishop of Canterbury
 " shall show the King to the people at four parts of the great pulpit or stage
 " to be made for the King, and shall say on this wise,—*Sirs*, here I present
 " **KING EDWARD**, rightful and undoubted inheritor, by the laws of God and
 " man, to the royal dignity, and crown imperial of this realm, whose con-
 " secration, unction, and coronation, is appointed by all the Nobles and
 " **Peers** of this land to be this day. **WILL YE SWAYN AT THIS TIME, AND ANSWER**
 " **YOUR GOOD WILLS AND ASSENTS TO THE SAME CONSECRATION, UNCTION,**
 " **AND CORONATION, AS BY YOUR DUTY OF ALLEGIANCE YE BE BOUND TO DO?**
 " The people to answer, *yea, yea, yea*, King Edward, King Edward, King
 " Edward."—See the "Order for the Coronation of King Edward," in Burnet's
 " and Collier's Collection of Records. Ex Libro Conchili.

Short, to reason as wisely as if we were to charge-mischief on an event by asserting the wickedness of attempting it, and then go round to prove the wickedness of the attempt by the mischief of the event.

The chief account which Cobbett gives of the Reformation under Edward, consists in a repetition of the cry of plunder. "This (he says) was the real "*Reformation Reign*"; for it was a reign of robbery and hyprocrisy, without any thing to be compared with them; any thing in any country, or any age. *Religion, conscience*, was always the pretext; but, in one way or another, robbery and plunder was always the end." (Let. 7. § 199.) Cobbett's History of this robbery, must however, appear very unsatisfactory to his most admiring readers. Few facts are mentioned, and where persons and localities are noticed, it is without explanation or reference. Much is said of Chantries, Altars, &c. The alienation of Chantry lands was one method of providing for the new Peers, who have been mentioned as created according to the will of Henry; but what is chiefly worthy of remark, is censure of the effrontery with which Cobbett uniformly places Cranmer's name in this connection, is the fact, that when the Bill for giving the Chantries to the King was in progress through the Lords (1549) the Archbishop joined the Popish Bishops in objecting to it, and finally voted against it.* In removing from the Church a profusion of gold and silver ornaments, appendages chiefly of idolatrous services, a competent regard was paid to the decency and even elegance of public worship. Thus in a visitation on this head, the King directed silver chalices, "comely furniture" for the communion table, and surplices, to be distributed to all the Churches, Chapels, and Cathedrals.† The depreciation and suppression of some Bishoprics, may be allowed, as proofs of the meanest avarice; but to confound the accidental rapacity of certain courtiers,

* Burnet. Vol. 2. p. 48.

† Burnet. Vol. 2. p. 217.

with the public measures of the Reformers, will scarcely, we imagine, be taken by the most thoughtless as any proof, that the Reformation itself was nothing but a scene of plunder, and mercenary devastation. Here we may observe that in recording the History of the change from affluence to poverty in the Romish Church, a distinction ought carefully to be maintained between the principles, on the strength of which the Reformers divested it of its enormous resources, and the manner in which individuals enriched themselves.—Cobbett has evidently confounded these together, charging on the former, the unprincipled acts of the latter. “The Reformation (he says) was not the work of virtue, of fanaticism, of error, of ambition; but of a *love of plunder*. This was its great animating principle—in this it began, and in this it proceeded till there was nothing left for it to work on.”—(Let. 7. § 201.) But this opinion of the subject can exist only in connection with the most superficial and limited views. If we were to take a cursory glance at the history of the men who in every age and country, have formed the bulwark of opposition to popery; we might find them in possession of characters, and in circumstances, incapable of resting under the suspicion of avarice in any degree. The sacrifice of worldly dignity, ease, and social enjoyment; and in innumerable instances, of liberty and life; ought to hallow and exalt in universal estimation, the principles, for which as Protestants, we are now contending. The History of the Reformation in Germany, calumnies on which Cobbett has mixed up with his distortion of English affairs, affords many exemplifications of the integrity of conscience, contempt of worldly aggrandisement, and heroic defiance of danger; which by appealing to every relic of honour in the bosom, ought to stay even a hireling scribe in the career of his abuse, though his sordid engagements may not allow him to commend. And if it be any recommendation of the age of chivalry, that made sworn foes generously prompt to acknowledge each

others excellence, how must we despise that spirit, which is the "werdy war" of theological controversy, blackens the brightest traits of character, because found among those who dissent from us. But to confine our remarks to the worthies of the English Reformation, and reminding the reader that as an affair of Religious principle, its progress is to be traced independent of arms or laws; we ask, if the *Lollards* or *Wickliffites* could have been animated by the love of plunder? Could the indignant spirit which often rose against Papal usurpation, and which afforded Henry his chief advantage in pursuit of his own wishes, have been always prompted by this base feeling? And though the crime in all its atrocity is openly charged upon *Cranmer*, how are we to reconcile its justice, with the independence which led him, on more than one occasion, to oppose the wishes of his capricious Monarch, and to object to later acts of confiscation? That great wealth was taken from the *Romish Clergy*, from their *Monasteries*, their *Chantryes*, their *Shrines*, and their *Altars*, is not contradicted; but before we confidently ascribe this to the love of plunder, as though no other motive could rationally be supposed to operate with men who professed high and holy designs; it is necessary to show, that the possession of it in its causes and effects, was not injurious to the interests of Religion. And if this be incapable of proof, the charge of robbery against our Reformers, is no better sustained than if it were brought against *Moses* for destroying the golden calf; or against the Saviour himself for expelling the money changers from the temple. The sources of the wealth in dispute, were fatal corruptions of Religion, binding the multitude in the spells of superstition, and teaching them, that by enriching their instructors they saved themselves. — Whatever be our views of theological truth, this must be admitted, that the Doctrines for which Protestants contend as essential to the safety of sinners, are obscured and perverted by the very institutions which procured the Church of Rome

its wealth. If pilgrimages and the adoration of Saints are to be condemned,—if penances, indulgences, and masses are to be abolished—the *impoverishment of the Romish Church* follows as a necessary result of our most sacred principles. Though this impoverishment was far from being the ultimate design of our Reformers, it was justly and piously considered by them, necessary to the triumph of the truths they professed. No acts, however, which peculiarly belonged to the Reformers, are suffered to pass without the same profuse censure, as is thrown upon conduct for which they were far from being responsible. In this connection, we hear of the Homilies—Cranmer's Catechism—the Book of Common Prayer—and the translation of the Bible. These are mentioned as proofs of Cranmer's duplicity, and of the horrid impiety of the times! (Let. 7. § 198.) It is not necessary now to attempt a defence of the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in our native tongue, for however this zeal of Protestants may have appeared excessive and imprudent in the eyes of Roman Catholics, it has seldom been laid to their charge as their grossest crime. But Cobbett can mention nothing without superlative abuse. Speaking of alterations appointed in public worship, he says, "To reconcile the *people* to these innovations the plunderers had a *Bible* contrived for the purpose, which Bible was a *perversion of the original text*, wherever it was found to be necessary. *Of all the acts of this hypocritical and plundering reign this was perhaps the basest.*" (Let. 7. § 208.) Cobbett's judgment of the inaccuracy of any translation of the Bible is of little worth. While to speak of a Bible as *contrived for the purpose—a perversion of the original text*—is to give a character to the undertaking which it was never proved to possess, and with which, in the presence of learned adversaries, it could never have been received. Roman Catholic exceptions to Protestant versions are comparatively trifling, or have scarcely ever been sanctioned by that critical research and acumen which command respect. The indifference or hostility which

Papists have generally manifested on this head, affords at least a presumption of the impossibility of any fair version of their own, such as their own scholars might not be ashamed to defend, being made to support their system ; which impossibility is sufficient to prove its antisciptural nature. To palm any imposture on the world with the pretence of inspired authority, or in any degree to pervert the word of God, is conduct, which amidst all "hypocrisy" and "robbery," deserves to be stigmatized the "basest." But what shall we say of those who refuse an appeal to the truth of Heaven—remove the scriptures from the reach of the people—and describe every production of them for evidence or decision, as false and base ? If it be a crime to pervert the Scriptures, it is also criminal to neglect them ; since the authority which condemns in the one instance, demands the patience of enquiry, and the submission of prejudice in the other. They are not to be perverted because they are too holy to be examined, but because they are given as authentic and infallible guides for faith and practice. It may often be difficult to decide who acts the most criminal part ; the man who distorts the language of scripture to promote the march of error, or he who, from the same unhalloved motive, makes no reference to its authority where it claims to be heard and obeyed. The one is a *literal* perversion, the other a perversion of the nature of the gift, and a contempt of its design ; and this is the sin of which Popery stands convicted before the world by the admission of many of its Friends—the dictates of its Popes—the decrees of its Councils—and the general conduct of its Clergy. But not to extend the charge of an awful deficiency in obedience to the will of God, or to attempt a long defence of Protestant versions of the scripture, it will be sufficient to notice the gross and unpardonable inaccuracy into which Gobbett has fallen, in the extract given above. No act like what he calls, "the basest of this hypocritical and plundering reign" ever took place under Edward. This mode of

reconciling the people to innovation was of an earlier date. The English Bible in use up to the 19th or 20th of Elizabeth, was what is commonly called Tindall's, or on account of its preface, Cranmer's translation, translated by Tindall and Coverdale, during the former reign. Mistakes of this nature, made the foundation of violent declamation, must be sufficient to show Cobbett's incompetency to the work he has undertaken, both in a literary and moral point of view.

The *Insurrections* of this reign, as might be expected from this writer, are made the occasion of great reproach. But admitting the facts as Cobbett has stated them, we ask, if the opinions of insurgents are to be taken as infallible decisions on the change they happen to oppose? When any great Revolution commences, there are many who from a variety of inferior and unworthy motives will defend ancient institutions: who foolishly dwelling on the partial advantages of measures proposed to be abolished, magnify the temporary inconveniences of a change, without calculating on the great and perpetual benefits it is likely to secure. Every innovation, however momentous an improvement it may be, will always meet with interested objectors, who will be certain to find many popular prejudices upon which they may practise for support. The state of society which Popery produced in England, was, *politically* considered, unfavourable to any *religious* change. Monasteries by affording countenance to the indolence, indigence, and wickedness, they in great part caused, attracted to themselves the support of the indolent, the indigent, and the wicked. When, therefore, the Reformation commenced by showing the people their poverty, which had been too long concealed from their view, and by demanding that industry, which alone creates the wealth of a kingdom, it was certain to meet with an opposition which shows its importance, and proves its necessity. As a change in Religion merely, an enquiring people could not be insensible to its value, but as bearing on many political evils, it

had naturally to contend with the prejudices and interests by which long established evils are upheld to the last. It need not, therefore, occasion any difficulty to the friends of the Protestant Reformation, that a disbanded army of Monks and Friars, distributed through the kingdom, should have been able, with temporary success, to raise the standard of rebellion. To dwell upon their insurrections as proofs of the impolicy and mischief of the change in question, is to lose sight of those rules of enquiry by which we may ascertain what are the great principles of national prosperity and happiness ; and to cull facts with the sole design of awakening prejudices, however unfounded reflection might prove them. But there were other causes, beside the mere loss of Romish superstitions, which disturbed the tranquility of the people ; and causes of more powerful influence than any yet mentioned. And here we may notice the unfairness of the manner in which Cobbett represents the sentiments, and quotes the language of Hume. We are, however, we must confess, little disposed to defend the integrity of this celebrated Historian ; we always receive with caution, if not with scepticism, his moral and philosophical conjectures on the causes and probabilities of events, and are accustomed to regard him, as designing throughout his history to promote the same object as Cobbett, by abusing him, is seeking to advance, " It is curious enough (he says) to observe the *excuses* that Hume, in giving an account of these times attempts to make for the plunderers and their Reformation." He then quotes what Hume has said on the advantages of Monastic Institutions. But though he adds some of the remarks which succeed the following extract, he unfairly omits the least reference to other things, to which Hume himself attaches great importance. " These grievances " of the common people (writes Hume) were at that time " heightened by other causes. The arts of manufacture were " much more advanced in other European countries than in " England ; and even in England these arts had made greater

"progress than the knowledge of agriculture; a profession
 "which of all mechanical employments requires the most
 "reflection and experience. A great demand arose for wool,
 "both abroad and at home; pasturage was found more profit-
 "able than unskillful tillage; whole estates were laid waste
 "by inclosures; the tenants regarded as a useless burden,
 "were expelled their habitations; even the cottagers, deprived
 "of the commons on which they formerly fed their cattle,
 "were reduced to misery, and a decay of people as well as a
 "diminution of the former plenty, was remarked in the
 "Kingdom. *This grievance was now of an old date*; and
 "Sir Thomas More, alluding to it, observes in his Utopia,
 "that a sheep had become in England a more ravenous
 "animal than a lion or wolf, and devoured whole villages,
 "cities, and provinces. The general increase also of gold
 "and silver in Europe, after the discovery of the West Indies,
 "had a tendency to inflame these complaints. The growing
 "demand in the more commercial countries, had heightened
 "every where the price of commodities, which could easily
 "be transported thither; but in England, the labour of men,
 "who could not so easily change their habitation, still re-
 "mained nearly at the ancient rates; and the poor complained
 "that they could no longer gain a subsistence by their
 "industry." Then follow the words which Cobbett has
 detached from their connection, and broken down into such
 a sentence as Hume himself never wrote. "It was by an
 "addition alone of toil and application they were enabled
 "to procure a maintenance; and though this increase of
 "industry was at last the effect of the present situation,
 "and an effect beneficial to society, yet was it difficult for
 "the people to shake off their former habits of indolence;
 "and nothing but necessity could compel them to such an
 "exertion of their faculties."*

* Hume, Vol. 4, c. 21.

What the people felt bearing most heavily upon them, was the practice of inclosing ground for pasturage, mentioned before, which obviously interfered with their agricultural pursuits, from which their support was to be derived. The complaints of the commonalty were not against Cranmer and the Reformers, but against the Nobility and Gentry on account of these inclosures; till after the insurrections had been suppressed in several counties, "the Priests had the address to give their discontents a direction towards Religion." Neither were these complaints of modern date, arising out of the demerits of the Reformation, but appear to have been entertained by men of reflection and foresight, long before the peasantry were roused to a sense of their importance. Of this, the passage in the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, referred to by Hume, is a proof. The friends of the Reformation, it should be also observed, could not be more interested in the cause of these complaints, than the Roman Catholics themselves. The blinded adherents of Monks, and the idolaters of the Mass, were equally with others, negligent of tillage and sown, and no more anxious for the prevention of inclosures, in opposition to Protestantism, than the Protestants they opposed. The Protector, it is well known, befriended the people during their insurrections, and published his proclamation against the evil they deprecated. What Cobbett has said in derision of Hume, may easily be made to recoil on himself. "What does he mean (he enquires) by *public riches*? The Catholic Institutions *provided against the pressure of want amongst the people*; but prevented the increase of *public riches*. What again, I ask, is the meaning of the words *public riches*? What is, or ought to be the end of all government, and of every institution? Why, the *happiness of the people*? But this man seems like ADAM SMITH, and indeed, like almost every Scotch writer, to have a notion, that there may be great *public good*, though producing *individual misery*. They seem always to regard the people as so many cattle, working for an inde-

scribable something that they call *the public*," &c. (Let. 7, §211.)—This is contemptible affectation. Cobbett well understands the distinction between present and individual wealth, and national prosperity; and on other occasions can employ it with success. What, for instance, has he been accustomed to make the foundation of his arguments against paper currency, but its danger of creating a fictitious source of wealth, and leaving us in a moment of real exigence, to poverty?—Has he not often protested against various "Funds," and Charities, which "provided against the pressure of want" on distressed manufacturers, because according to him, they concealed from view, and left to increase the cause of distress? Does he suppose his readers incapable of perceiving, that what merely provided against the pressure of want, might leave the real source of necessity untouched? Monasteries in this respect were like hospitals amidst a pestilence, which cannot purify the atmosphere, though they afford aid to the diseased. Did Monasteries and Popish Institutions of any kind provide against the neglect of agriculture—as a fund of national wealth? Did they create a market for the industry of the people, and stimulating to habits of activity and enterprise, give them the power of competition with other nations? Did not their advantages rather consist in a temporary relief of the indolence and indigence they caused, at the same time, perpetuating and augmenting these evils, so that this becomes the merit of the Reformation, that if it made the people feel the evils of their condition, it destroyed their cause?

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THE
PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. X.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24.

THE reign of MARY furnishes one of the blackest pages of English History: it is marked by a total disregard of national character and prosperity, either in our domestic interests or foreign relations, and presents us with nothing but the distortions of bigotry, and ravages of intolerance. It was a reign of terror, whose measures, with scarcely any exception, had their origin in persecution; the disgrace not only of government, but of human nature itself. No one in recording the cruelties of Caligula, Nero, or Domitian, has had a more humiliating task to perform, than the historian of this reign. The name of Mary has long passed from father to son, as a proverb for what reflects the greatest disgrace on a woman and a Queen; and since the persecuting conduct of this Princess contributed more to the stability of the Reformation than any other event, the attempt to turn the current of popular feeling in her favour at the present day, is too gross a presumption on the ignorance, prejudice, and sickleness of the multitude. The English nation—the Protestant public—has always been decided in the detestation with which it has treated her memory; and a brief survey of her conduct

will be sufficient to show, that this does not arise from any want of delicacy towards her as a woman, nor from any inattention to the embarrassments of her station; but is in all its severity, the reprobation justly bestowed on an iniquitous system, and malignant heart.

Cobbett in recording the reign of Mary, speaks of her as "one of the most virtuous of human beings;" and of her crimes, and consequent misfortunes, as rendered unavoidable by the conduct of her predecessors,—declaring in short, that in her excellent qualities, her exalted virtues, her piety, charity, generosity, sacred adherence to her faith and word, her gratitude, and those feelings of anxiety for the greatness and honour of England, which hastened her to the grave, she was never equalled by any Sovereign that ever sat on the English throne, Alfred alone excepted! (*Lett.* 9, § 258).—It is plain to every one, that the reign of Mary takes its character from her zeal for the re-establishment of the Romish Church. This was the nucleus of her virtues—her pole-star over an ocean of crime and misery—the magnitude and sanctity of which, made intervening distresses nothing, and took from wickedness its grossness. Never, surely, was there a more shameless illustration of the execrable maxim, that the end sanctifies the means, than in the least commendation bestowed upon this sanguinary reign.

The Duke of Northumberland's ambition having been disappointed in his attempt to elevate the amiable and unfortunate JANE GREY to the throne, Mary's accession was generally acknowledged. The manner in which the nation submitted to her sway, has often been represented as evidence of a disposition in favour of the Romish Church; but considering the strong prejudice which existed in favour of hereditary succession, and the fear with which the power of Northumberland was regarded, Mary possessed advantages, which nothing but a prophetic anticipation of her real character could have destroyed. She was the lawful heir, and a recognition of her

power would prevent the turbulent ascendancy of the Dudleys, and the disasters of a civil war; supposing, therefore, that she was capable of being prompted by benevolence, and bound by justice, the people, apart from religious considerations, had many reasons to acknowledge her. That her accession did not prove the hostility, or even indifference of the people to the Reformation, is shown by the system of compromise she felt herself under the necessity of adopting, and which she afterwards basely violated, in contempt of the obligations of her promise. To the people of Suffolk in particular, among whom she retired on the rising of Northumberland, she pledged her word as a condition of their support, that she would not change the laws of Edward. In the Council, also, she plainly declared, that her resolution was to allow freedom of conscience in matters of religion. But when afterwards the men of Suffolk reminded her of her promise to them, one of them was exposed for three days in the pillory on the charge of *defaming* her! And when about the same time, Bonner's Chaplain had been delivered by two Reformed Preachers, from the danger into which his calumnies on Edward had hurried him; these two men, on the charge of having an undue influence over the multitude, were imprisoned, one in his own house, and the other in the Tower! But Mary's depravity as a Queen was precocious. She no sooner found herself on the throne, than she crushed with an iron hand, the hopes she had invited. She published a treacherous proclamation, in which, recollecting her promise, she affirmed, that though she intended to persevere in the Roman Catholic Religion herself, she would use no force with her subjects, *till public order should be taken by common consent!* Among other things sufficiently intelligible as threats against the Reformers, she prohibited preaching without her special license, which, of course, shut the Protestants out of the pulpit. One of her next steps was to deprive five Protestant Bishops, and to re-establish Popish ones in their stead; and though the Bishopric of Durham had been dissolved by the

authority of Parliament, she chose to erect it anew, in favour of Tonstall. Arbitrary imprisonment followed deprivation. Judge Hales, one of the most strenuous defenders of the Queen's title, was confined, under treatment of the greatest severity, on account of charging the Justices of Kent to conform to the laws of Edward, which were then unrepealed. Cranmer, as might have been expected, when gratitude and justice were openly proscribed, soon felt the persecuting power of the Queen. Though he had done no more in supporting Henry's divorce from her mother, than was chargeable on Gardiner, now raised to honour; and though he had stood between Mary and her father's anger, when her life was threatened by the vindictive monarch; his fall was determined; and for merely contradicting a calumny of Bonner, who affirmed that he had promised the Queen to conform, he was committed to the Tower, till some other excuse might be invented for his death. The abolished rites of the Romish Church were openly revived, and imprisonment and death decreed to him, who dared to whisper the truth of their unlawfulness. Added to which, the Queen was at this time secretly negotiating with the Pope and Emperor, on subjects which she feared to disclose to the nation, and which afterwards involved the country in misfortune and disgrace.— With these proofs of intolerance, illegality, and faithlessness, the Reformed could no longer doubt the nature of their impending fate. Foreigners, some of the most useful artisans the Kingdom contained, returned abroad; together with as many native Protestants as possible. Thus far Mary proceeded in changing the aspect of the nation, without even seeking the sanction of Parliament, in contempt both of the laws, and of her own promise, by which she was bound.* Cobbett speaks of the *just* and *beneficent* acts by which she began her reign. How far she deserves the praise of lightening the burdens of

* Burnet, V. 2. B. 2.

her people, we may presently learn from the violence of her extortions. She indeed remitted the last subsidy granted to Edward, but was never remarkable for modesty in requiring aid for herself. When the Parliament met, mass, *though abolished by law*, was performed with a parade the most insulting to the nation. And when Taylor, Bishop of Lincoln, refused to join in the unlawful service, he was violently thrust out of the House. Cobbett affects surprise and indignation at the compliance of the Parliament with the wishes of Mary, compared with the conduct of the former reigns. "And now (he says) we are about to witness a scene which, were not its existence so well attested, must pass for the wildest of romance. What? That Parliament, who had declared Cranmer's divorce of Catherine to be lawful, and who had enacted that Mary was a bastard, acknowledged that same Mary to be the lawful heir to the throne! That Parliament which had abolished the Catholic worship, and created the Protestant worship, on the ground that the former was idolatrous and damnable, and the latter agreeable to the will of God, abolish the latter and restore the former! What? Do these things? And that, too, without any *force*; without being *compelled* to do them? No; not exactly so: for it had *the people to fear*," &c. (Let. 8, § 226.) The History of the English Senate during this period is no very honourable record. But why the suppleness of the Parliament in re-establishing the Roman Catholic Religion, should be made to reflect discredit on the former Protestant establishment, is difficult of solution. If composed of men who were without principle they disgrace Popery. If they desisted from opposition, believing it to be fruitless, they prove the enormity of the system to which they conformed, as a contempt of law and justice; and the flagrancy of its advocates, as the most shameless of tyrants. But they had, we are told, the people to fear. This, however, is not only gratuitous, it is contradictory to fact. For if they had merely accommodated

themselves to national feeling, why a resort to penal statutes—to the dungeon and the stake? The truth is, the Reformation, as the Religion of the State, ebbed and flowed with the prejudices of Princes, and the sordid interests of the Nobles and Clergy; while as an independent system of faith and practice among the people, it constantly spread. The enactments of Parliament were no more an index to the sentiments of the nation, than infallible decisions, on points of religious faith. During Henry's reign, the Parliament was no more Protestant than the King. During the reign of Edward it became more decided. But when Mary summoned it, measures had previously been laid for its degradation; and it met with the mortifying assurance, that it was at the peril of any of its members to oppose her infuriated zeal. If we think for a moment of the circumstances under which elections to this Parliament took place, the certainty of a full and excessive employment of the Crown influence, and the backwardness of a Reformer to take a seat in a House where he could not give a conscientious vote but at the risk of his life; we may safely conclude that Mary had secured a most obsequious and unprincipled House of Commons. When we look also at the House of Peers, and recollect the changes which had been made with a view to its meeting, and how its members were interested in making common cause with the court, we can expect little from this branch of the legislature. It was not the Parliament of Henry, or of Edward, that abolished the Reformation; but one packed for the purpose, by the artifice of Mary. Protestantism is no way affected by its baseness, for its baseness exposes the enormity of the influence in which it took its rise. It was under a compelling power—its coercion was relentless and bloody—but at the same time it will be seen that the Parliaments of this reign embraced many opportunities afforded them to oppose the designs of the Queen.

The Session was distinguished by an establishment of the Queen's title; by several attainders for high treason; by

authorising the restoration of Popish services; and especially by a repeal of the statutes of Edward regarding Religion. Mary's projected marriage with Philip, the son of the Emperor Charles V. engaged the attention and alarmed the fears of the Commons; when venturing to dissuade her from marriage with a Foreigner, she hastily dissolved them! It is not our intention to dwell at length, on the policy of this marriage, though we may be expected to state that its chief support was all along derived from Roman Catholic infatuation. What advantage could possibly be obtained for England, by making it in any degree, appendant to the overgrown power of the Emperor? If a dread of the union of France with Scotland was worth consideration, was it honourable to think of surrendering the nation to Germany or Spain? "Such (says Cobbett) was the policy which dictated this celebrated match." The wisdom of which policy was soon obvious in the effects of a war with France. It is amusing to observe how Cobbett is perplexed by ascribing to Mary a care for the glory of her people in this marriage, while he is obliged to admit that the same motive influenced the Parliament in opposing it. "What Queen, what Sovereign, ever took more care of the glory of a people? Yet the fact appears to be, that there was *some jealousy* in the nation at large, as to this *foreign* connexion; and I am not one of those who are disposed to censure this jealousy." Let the reader, however, observe, that in the former paragraph, the nation on this account is called "very unreasonable and ungrateful." "But can I (he adds) have the conscience to commend, or, even to abstain from censuring this jealousy in our Catholic forefathers, without feeling as a Protestant, my cheeks burn with shame at what has taken place in Protestant times, and even in my own time!" (Let. 8, § 243.) All these bursts of pained and indignant virtue proceed upon a very absurd assumption. The rash or dishonest writer speaks of this jealousy as Catholic, when the fact is that the marriage

with Philip was the object of intense desire with our Catholic forefathers, and the jealousy in question arose from the dread of Papal ascendancy. Suppose we have of late been accustomed to some incorrect views of foreign relationship, just in proportion as we are censurable now, and the feeling of opposition to Mary's marriage is admitted to have been valuable, her precipitancy and that of Gardiner and others in the case, remains the subject of reproach and condemnation. Cobbett finds this jealousy, which chiefly existed among the friends of the Reformation, to be too troublesome for his management; even he knows not how to condemn it, nor to free the Queen from the blame it implies; so that after falsely ascribing it to the Catholics themselves, he falls foully on the Protestants of the present day, and reproaches them for its want. This is the meanest artifice. Does not my cheek, he says, burn with shame when I think that William III. was a foreigner, and that we are now supporting the Prince of Saxe Coburg—a foreigner also? If, we reply, there is reason for shame on this account, he ought certainly to be ashamed of advocating the cause of Mary; but he, it appears, can “bid the blush,” or “blush only on one side.” Convenient, if not amiable sensibility! The adjustment of the marriage preliminaries was marked by some appearance of deference to the wishes of the nation. Though it was unjustly resolved that whatever opposition existed the marriage should take place, it was thought advisable to render it as acceptable as possible. The extremely compliant terms, on which the Emperor acceded, naturally awakened suspicion; especially when it was known that he had sent to Gardiner twelve hundred thousand crowns, equal to four hundred thousand pounds, for his assistance in removing scruples, and made no secret of having bound Philip to repay him on attaining to the throne of England. The duplicity of Charles was well known, and the character of Mary was no longer a secret. The people therefore had little reason for

confidence in a treaty which ambition and bigotry would be tempted to violate. If Mary and her Counsellors had so far forgotten the honour of the Crown, and the welfare of her people, as to entertain the project; little credit was due to the sincerity of any professions, or the solidity of any engagements by which she sought to recommend it. She regarded it as an accession of power, in her opposition to the Reformation; and viewed in this light, it justly became an object of dread, to which nothing ought to have reconciled the people. The insurrection which took place, chiefly under the direction of Sir Thomas Wyatt, had for its avowed design, the prevention of the Queen's marriage, without the mention of controverted points in religion. Yet Cobbett, ascribing all honourable jealousy on this head to the Catholics, mentions the rebellion in another connection; and refers it to the zeal of the Reformed Preachers in protesting against the government of a woman! Mary's lenity also, is made in this connection, the subject of laudation, because, she spared the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, when it would have been dangerous to destroy her, though she seized this occasion for bringing her, her husband, and father to the block. In addition to this, this mild and compassionate Sovereign, ordered the execution of about sixty persons; and near four hundred, are said to have suffered on account of an insurrection in which no blood had been shed. And lastly, an attempt was made to involve the Princess Elizabeth in the guilt of rebellion.* The manner in which Cobbett has separated these things, attributing what proves the temper of the nation to have been in favour of the Reformation, to the Roman Catholics; and then exhibiting the Queen as a pattern of excellence, under circumstances, the real nature of which shows her falsehood and cruelty, is another evidence of his artifice as an historian: "In my relation (he afterwards says) I have not adhered to

* Burnet, v. 2, 273. Hume, v. 6, c. 36.

the exact chronological order, which would have too much broken my matter into detached parcels" (Let 8, § 245.)—And what! Is chronological order of no importance in a history which professes to be a developement of passions and principles? Will an observance of order break the matter of history into "detached parcels?" The truth is, this man has broken his subject into fragments, and shifting them from place to place, allows us to see no more than may answer his party design, and places these in such positions that they deceive the eye. His neglect of order is a gross violation of truth.

The domestic conduct of Mary and Philip, is scarcely the proper subject for remark in this place; we may, however, be excused mentioning, that it betrayed the greatest weakness on her part. Infatuated with a husband who despised her, her jealousy was perpetually alarmed, leading her into the most tormenting fondness towards him, and injustice towards others. His demands on her resources were great, and the only way in which she found it possible to gratify him for a moment, was to study his rapacity,—multiplying the most oppressive exactions from her subjects. She first levied a loan of *sixty thousand pounds* upon a thousand persons, and then another loan on all who possessed *twenty pounds* a year. At another time, she exacted *sixty thousand marks* from *seven thousand* yeomen, and *thirty-six thousand pounds* from the merchants. Commerce was interrupted to gratify her exorbitance. Hence she placed certain prohibitions on the exportation of cloth; and when the English Company at Antwerp refused her a loan of *forty thousand pounds*, she repressed her anger till they had shipped at her own ports large quantities of cloth, when she laid an embargo on their ships, and obliged them to grant the *forty thousand pounds* first demanded,—to engage *twenty thousand* more at a given period,—and submit to an imposition of *twenty shillings* on each piece. The following case is, if possible, still more flagrantlly wicked: understanding that the Italian Merchants

had shipped *forty thousand* pieces of cloth for the Levant, she prohibited their exportation by closing a bargain with interested adventurers, from whom she received *fifty thousand pounds*, in addition to unusual impositions. So low at the same time had her credit sunk, that when she offered the City of Antwerp *fourteen per cent.* for *thirty thousand pounds*, it was refused, till she compelled the City of London to suretyship!† Hume was supported by facts when he said, that the chief part of government to which she attended, was the extortion of money from her people, in order to satisfy the demands of her husband. If any thing divided her heart with zeal for the Romish Church, it was her anxiety to purchase his attentions.

When involved in a war with France, she again and again levied loans on the oppressed; and after equipping a fleet which she knew not how to victual, she seized all the corn she could find in Norfolk and Suffolk, without any compensation to the owners.

The war with France was as unnecessary as it proved inglorious. Though in the articles of Mary's marriage, it was stipulated that the alliance between England and France should be preserved, notwithstanding war between France and Spain; Philip no sooner found himself a monarch abroad, engaged in hostilities with France, than he insisted on English aid; and coming to London threatened the Queen never more to set foot in England, if he were disappointed in this request. This was enough. With an exhausted revenue, and a divided council, she levied an army for his support; but so feebly was her share in the war maintained, and so jealous had her Roman Catholic counsellors become of her husband's designs, that notwithstanding his warning, of the danger of Calais, this boasted possession of the English on the Gallic shore fell into the hands of the Duke of Guise. This event inflamed the discontents of the people, added to

† Hume, c. 37.

her own well-merited shame, and completed the degradation of her reign. These were the consequences of that marriage, which in the anticipations both of the Queen and her advisers, was to have perfected her triumph over the Reformation. It now remains to enquire, how she endeavoured to reconcile the kingdom to Rome, from which it had so deeply revolted. The rites and ceremonies of Popery were resumed without legal sanction, and the Parliament required to repeal the laws, which the court had previously commanded to be broken. But still the point of Papal supremacy remained unsettled, and the reversion of property to the Church a question of difficult solution. On all such points, however, the Queen took the side of bigotry, superstition, and tyranny. After much caballing between the Queen and the Pope, and between Gardiner and the Emperor, Cardinal Pole arrived in England with discretionary powers as legate. The Queen having renounced, resumed, and a second time abandoned the title of supreme head, the Cardinal formally invited the Parliament to petition for a reconciliation with Rome. This was done, and the representative of his Holiness *solemnly absolved* the nation! "Thus (says Cobbett) was England once more a *Catholic* country. She was *restored* to the fold of Christ." (Let. 8, § 232.) But how far the sense of the country went along with these measures, is not so easily determined, as such interjectional sentences are written. The preliminaries to this *restoration* were secretly conducted—the legate could not be received with public honours, due to his rank and commission—and those compromises were obliged to be made which both disappointed Mary, and offended his Holiness. "She (England, Cobbett says) was *restored* to the fold of Christ, but the fold had been plundered of its hospitality and charity, and the plunderers before they pronounced the *Amen*, had taken care that the plunder should not be restored." So strong it appears, was the country's concern for the interest of the Church, and the authority of the Pope; that the one

was left unrepaired, and the other obstinately disobeyed. Now we naturally ask, who these plunderers were, and what it was which conferred importance on their opposition? And Cobbett himself shall tell us that they were the Queens own supporters and counsellors. "Observe in how forlorn a state, as to this question, she was placed. There was scarcely a nobleman, or gentleman of any note in the kingdom, who had not in some way or other, soiled his hands with the plunder. The *Catholic Bishops*, all but FISHER, had assented to the abolition of the Pope's supremacy. Bishop GARDINER, who was now her HIGH CHANCELLOR, was one of these, though he had been deprived of his bishoprick, and imprisoned in the Tower, because he opposed CRANMER's further projects," &c. (Let. 8, § 227.) Then follows an acknowledgement that a compromise with the plunderers was adopted.— "Now then (he adds) it was *fully proved* to all the world, and *now* this plundered nation, who had been reduced to the greatest misery by what had been impudently called the Reformation, &c. &c.—that all these from first to last had proceeded from *the love of plunder*." Now admitting for a moment, the fairness of all this, it follows that the change from Protestantism to Popery was as much a mercenary compact, as the former change from Popery to Protestantism is said to have been. And here we may pause and ask, how far is Popery benefited by such advocacy? How is the Reformation discredited by those wanton censures which fall with equal weight on both sides? The truth is, that the dissolution of Monasteries had altered the state of the kingdom so completely that the interest of the nobles, and many of the principal clergy, together with the habits of the people stood in the way of their restoration. Mary went as far as she was able, and her next step would have been to have divided the Catholics against her, and involved the kingdom in a civil war.

The conduct of Mary in restoring the property of the Church, is made the subject of invidious and unfounded praise. While the evidence stands, that the Crown needed the wealth in question more than the Church; and that at the time when the Queen surrendered her property she was reduced to the necessity of soliciting aid from the Parliament, this part of her reign is resolvable into nothing better than the most blinded superstition. Pope Julius III. excommunicated all who held what was called the property of the Church; the haughty PAUL IV. solemnly affirmed that Peter would not open the gates of Heaven to the English, if they continued to usurp his patrimony on earth! The bull of the former, and the threat of the latter Pope had their desired effect on Mary. Though she could not prevail on others to see their

danger in the same light, she determined to part with every thing rather than risk the displeasure of St. Peter; and when expostulated with on the impolicy of her conduct, replied with her characteristic devotedness to Popery—that she valued the salvation of her soul, more than ten such kingdoms as England! Thus her generous and disinterested acts, were the compromise with necessity of that execrable superstition, which if it had not been for the strength of the Reformation, would have degraded the kingdom as effectually as the pusillanimity of John had formerly done. If we pity the woman we despise the Queen.

The *persecutions* of this reign, are treated by Cobbett as a trifling matter. He affects to see in them little injustice or cruelty. He compares them with the persecutions of Elizabeth. But as though this were giving them an importance which does not belong to them, he asks, if the mass of suffering which they include, surpassed what was endured, on the same account, during the late reign? Our readers are, no doubt, surprized at such a question, and are tasking their memories most severely to find any thing in the annals of George III, to be compared with the fires of Smithfield. What must greatly perplex them, is the assertion, that the great sufferings of the late reign, were on the same account as the martyrdoms under Mary: but, let Cobbett's own words explain the identity. “Unless *Smithfield* and *burning* have any peculiar agony, any thing *worse than death* to impart, did Smithfield ever witness so great a mass of suffering as the *Old Bailey* has witnessed, on account of offences against that purely Protestant invention, *Bank Notes?*” (Let. 9, § 258).—This is like ascribing, in a former place, the *typhus fever* to Protestantism! and reminds us of the saying, that Tenterden steeple was the cause of Goodwin Sands! Bank Notes, and the real presence—the circulation of the former—and the denial of the latter are no longer it seems distinguishable! We have really no faculties for the detection of such subtle relations, and if we had, know not how the mischiefs of one can excuse the crimes of the other. But let us for one moment, look at this part of Mary's administration, and we do not doubt of being able to make it appear so flagrantly unjust and brutal; that instead of being excused by a comparison with any thing else, it will prepare us to treat with abhorrence every thing which admits of such a comparison. We regard with detestation, persecution in the support of any cause. Elizabeth and Cranmer have our condemnation as far as they were implicated in its guilt. But in the same manner as we censure them, whenever they employed in affairs of religion, the terror of the secular arm; we have scarcely any thing but censure for Mary, whose business, policy, and religion, was *PERSECUTION*.

When the penal statutes against heretics were revived (1552), it became a question of debate, whether they should be employed merely to restrain by terror, or destroy by punishment. Cardinal Pole recommended lenity, Gardiner enforced cruelty. The former was probably a sincere man, the other a shuffling, time-serving Courtier; but suiting the inclination of the King and Queen, he prevailed. He expected, it seems, by the execution of a few Protestant leaders, to terrify others into submission; but finding the work increase upon his hands, he gave the drudgery of it to Bonner. This prelate, not contenting himself with the delivery of orders for imprisonment and death, descended to the most brutal indulgences, in tormenting his unfortunate victims with his own hands. All ages—both sexes—fell beneath his implacable rage. Pretences the most frivolous, were made the foundation of the most sanguinary measures. A denial of the real presence was the offence into which multitudes were studiously drawn. Many, who were reluctant to oppose themselves to the faith of the Court, were seized upon suspicion, and presented with articles for subscription, the refusal of which, was death in every instance. HOOPER, RIDLEY, and LATIMER, and last of all, the calumniated CRANMER, fell in this storm; and even the life of the PRINCESS ELIZABETH was seriously endangered.—Amidst these scenes of savage triumph, the Spanish Inquisition appears to have been an object of envy, and in imitation of that ghastly tribunal, a Commission was appointed, for the secret prosecution of the most arbitrary and iniquitous measures, and which left no probability of escape to any, who were either religiously or politically obnoxious to suspicion. The circumstances which frequently attended arraignments and executions, were marked with the most studied and insulting barbarity; *two hundred and seventy-seven* executions are said to have taken place in less than three years. These persecutions, let it also be remarked, were the most inexcusable recorded in the annals of tyranny or intolerance. The principal perpetrators, MARY, GARDINER, and BONNER, had many resentments to gratify; and they no sooner found themselves in possession of power, than exasperated feelings overflowed. They had nourished their cruelty in confinement, and therefore, in their liberty, became frantic and ferocious. These inflictions of death cannot be excused as the stern dictate of principle, though bad,—as politically necessary to the prosecution of any design, whatever were its merits—they were *excessive*, according to every rule which the Popish advocate can furnish; they formed the intemperate and heated revelry of death,—an intoxicating banquet of blood—and instead of comparing them with the indefensible persecutions of later times, they disgust us by

their resemblance to the cannibalism of savages. "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great amazement." It is impossible to close this subject without pausing over the grave of the Martyrs, and whatever were their errors, admiring their constancy unto death. Would, that we could imitate their firmness, and emulate the triumph of their faith—a faith, which though condemned by the prophane, as without works, "wrought wonders," and stands upon record as our incentive to perseverance and enterprise. Cobbett with a malignity, which on this subject, renders him unworthy of any answer, says of the martyrs, that they were "generally a set of the most wicked wretches"—"and without a single exception, apostates, perjurers, and plunderers,"—a slander, to give the least plausibility to which, would be a more difficult task, than he has yet had the temerity to attempt. Their fate is what the most illustrious servants of the cross must always expect, chilling neglect, or the grossest misrepresentation, and the most inveterate enmity. They have seldom been chosen as the ornaments of history, and have in few instances, furnished inspiration to the Poet.* Protestants! let it be your aim to illustrate the power of their example, and by your self-denial and devotedness in piety, to preserve and purify the principles they have committed to your charge.

*Their blood is shed
 In confirmation of the noblest claim,
 Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
 To walk with God, to be divinely free,
 To soar and to anticipate the skies,
 Yet few remember them. They lived unknown,
 Till persecution drag'd them into fame,
 And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew---
 No marble tells us whither. With their names
 No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;
 And history, so warm on meaner themes,
 Is cold on this. She execrates indeed,
 The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,
 But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.

TASK. B. 5.

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THE PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. XI.

SATURDAY, MARCH 4.

WE have now brought the History of the Reformation to a most important era. We have seen the jealousy of the nation against a foreign supremacy, manifested on various occasions, while the nation continued Popish—we have seen, especially in the case of the *WICKLIFFITES*, the piety of many rising in opposition to the dogmas and ceremonies of the Romish Church—we have beheld the facilities which Providence afforded the pious Reformers in the indignation of *Henry VIII.*; followed by greater sincerity in the promotion of religious changes by the Protector Somerset, and the young King, Edward—we have had to review the sudden revulsion of affairs under Mary, when political intrigue, and the strong arm of power were employed to destroy the edifice, and subvert the foundations of Protestantism in our country—in connection with which, we have had the satisfaction of perceiving, that however accommodating to the changes of the Court, Councils and Parliaments proved, there was an efficiency or sublimity in the Religion of Protestants, which rendered it capable of surviving all opposition, and of strengthening amidst persecution itself. In the review of this History, we are

naturally impressed with the following considerations.—*First*, The Reformation of Religion has been unintentionally befriended by men whose designs were selfish and secular. *Secondly*, The transitions, in the same men, from one system to another, were the mere accommodation of personal interest to changes in which ~~they~~ they felt no religious concern. *Thirdly*, That, excepting the principles of Cranmer and a few others, the progress of the Reformation, as a national establishment or measure of State, may be considered an affair of political calculation, for the errors and abuses of which Religion must not be made accountable. *Fourthly*, The impelling and compelling power by which the Reformation in England was chiefly promoted, was the religious information discovering the corruptions of Popery, which the reformed teachers circulated through the land; and to this, without any controversial asperity, we may add a *fifth* observation, that the principal opposition which the Reformation had to encounter, was hostility to freedom of enquiry, and to the rights of conscience.

At the death of Mary, the nation had greater reason for dissatisfaction with Popery than ever. Her anxiety to destroy Protestantism among her subjects, had led to deeds of cruelty at which humanity revolts; while the desire to serve and strengthen her Roman Catholic connections abroad had exhausted the resources, and injured the credit and authority of the nation. When therefore the time for Elizabeth's accession arrived, the nation, through almost all its distinctions, anticipated a relief, and ensured her a popularity which resembled enthusiastic devotion. Cobbett endeavours to account for the flattering circumstances under which Elizabeth ascended the throne, by dwelling on the misfortune in case her right had been denied, of being subjected to France by the accession of Mary of Scotland, who was at this period the wife of the Dauphin. Yea, he maintains that Elizabeth's success in establishing the Reformation, from first to last, arose from the

ation's jealousy on this head. It was not disgust with Römish superstitions—it was not the intolerant exercise of power; Elizabeth, it appears, might have countenanced the Reformers, and persecuted the Catholics to death in vain, if the Catholics themselves, to use Cobbett's phrase, had not "cooled," and become so cold and unnaturally frigid, as to sacrifice the interests, and almost the existence of their Church, to their political independence. It is amusing to read Cobbett's description of the dilemma in which they were placed, and the manner in which, patriotic at the expense of their Religion, they threw themselves on the horns of the Reformation.—“The question with the nation was, in short, the Protestant Religion, Elizabeth, and independence; or, the Catholic Religion, Mary Stuart, and *submission to foreigners*. They decided for the former,” &c. (Let. 10, § 308.) This, we imagine, is a most unsatisfactory way of accounting for the popularity of the Queen, and the joy of her people; for, had the nation been Roman Catholic, and her power acknowledged merely as a defence against foreigners, the acknowledgment of it would have been accompanied with decided opposition to her Protestant prepossessions. But if reluctance to open the way for the accession of Mary Stuart be insufficient to account for the circumstances under which Elizabeth commenced her reign, it is less plausible as a reason for her subsequent success in establishing the Reformation. Yet Cobbett, who will have the nation to be Catholic, even when reformed, insists on this as the sole reason. “This was the real reason (he says) of Elizabeth's success in her work of extirpating the Catholic Religion.”—“Here we have the great, indeed the only cause of Elizabeth's success in rooting out the Catholic Religion.” (Let. 10, § 304, § 305).—Never was assertion more unfounded, or the support of it more weakly and inconsistently maintained; if the nation had been Catholic, though it chose Elizabeth as Queen, it might surely have opposed, and successfully, the changes she attempted. Whatever was

the wisdom of foreign policy, the Reformation was a *domestic transaction*, and it is nothing but trifling with the common sagacity of readers, to maintain that there was no alternative between the Reformation and subjection to foreigners. For allowing that there was no alternative between Elizabeth, and subjection to foreigners, it does not follow that a popish council—a popish parliament—and a popish people, were under the necessity of submitting to her unbounded wishes for a change in their religion. Though supported on the throne in opposition to another, who might have destroyed their independence, they might have impeded, if not effectually prevented, the Reformation, had they had popish principles to maintain. Besides, Cobbett's view of the case must be resented by Roman Catholics themselves as libellous, giving such a representation of their conduct as amounts to an abandonment of their faith. According to him, the Reformation under Elizabeth was owing to their connivance. They surrendered their religion; patriots of unexampled firmness, they were traitors to their Church. These are some of the monstrous inconsistencies which Cobbett is imposing on his readers as history, and which certainly make the Reformation a more anomalous and unaccountable affair than any other distortion of bigotry and ignorance can be imagined to do. As another specimen of Cobbett's dishonest evasion of the principles he defends, equal to the misrepresentation of facts, we may notice his reference to the Pope's excommunication, in connection with the policy he has attributed to the Catholics of this period. "Though the decision of the Pope (he says) was perfectly honest and just in itself, that decision was in its obvious and inevitable consequences, rendered, by a combination of circumstances, hostile to the greatness, the laws, the liberties, and the laudable pride of Englishmen, that they were reduced to the absolute necessity of setting his decision at naught, or of surrendering their very name as a nation." (Let. 10, § 304.) Our readers will recollect, that Cobbett, particu-

Early in the early part of his work, has contended for the supremacy of the Pope; but, here it is admitted, that "in certain combinations of circumstances," his most solemn and authoritative decisions may be set at nought. This is not only to question his infallibility, but to reduce his authority to nothing. Besides which, it follows from the admitted hostility of the Pope's decision to "the greatness, the laws, the liberties, and the laudable pride of Englishmen," that patriotism, or the lowest degree of national spirit, must lead to a rejection of papal authority; or in other words, the honour of Englishmen, and the duties of a papist, cannot be both preserved. Roman Catholics, it appears, must be content to sacrifice much of credit and consistency for the benefit of Cobbett's advocacy. Cobbett does not always write intelligibly. What does he mean, when he says, that *the decision of the Pope was perfectly just and honest in itself*, yet that Englishmen were reduced to the absolute necessity of setting it at nought? How that could be perfectly honest and just in itself, which it was perfectly honest and just in those to whom it was addressed to despise, we are at a loss to conceive. Did the writer intend that the Pope was honest and just in forming and publishing his decision? and surely this must have been intended, if nothing more. Not, as Protestants to say, that there were the greatest dishonesty, and the greatest injustice, in giving the papal sanction to a rebellion in England; we ask, what is the ground of obedience to the Pope; if not merely the arbitrary exercise of his authority is to be despised—but the admitted honesty and justice of his decisions to be set at nought? This is making papal authority the most contemptible—a mere thing of convenience—which may be appealed to in the defence of actions really bad, and despised, when it commands actions avowedly good! Roman Catholics, we repeat, and even his Holiness himself, must be content to surrender much of credit and consistency for the benefit of Cobbett's advocacy. "But, observe (he adds) by the

bye, this dilemma, and all the dangers and suffering it produced, arose entirely out of the Reformation." This is in other words seriously to affirm, that if the Reformation had not taken place, Roman Catholics would not have been put to this trial of consistency! Who does not see, that the Reformation in affording an opportunity for action, is not responsible for the unprincipled conduct of those who opposed it?

With regard to the cause of Elizabeth's success in establishing the Reformation, which we have seen Cobbett resolves into a universal dread of Mary Stuart's accession, we observe that his position is not only encumbered with the grossest absurdities as far as Roman Catholics are concerned, but that it is plainly contradicted by the facts belonging to the history of this period. Let it be observed, that the danger of Mary's subjecting the nation to France, is mentioned, not only as accounting for the agreement to Elizabeth's accession, which existed immediately after her sister's death, but is repeatedly assigned in other places, as the only cause of her success in "rooting out the Roman Catholic Religion." Now this danger was of short duration. It arose, according to Cobbett, from the marriage of the Queen of Scots with the Dauphin, in consequence of which, she became Queen Consort of France, eight months after Elizabeth's accession (Let. 9. § 262. Let. 10. § 303.). But only *seventeen months* afterwards, her husband died, her political importance in France was destroyed, she had enemies in that country, and "her husband's mother, Catherine de Medici, soon convinced her, that to be any thing she must return to Scotland." (Let. 10. § 306.) Now let the reader mark Cobbett's admission, "There was for the present, at least, an end to the danger from the union of Scotland with France." (Let. 10. § 307.) This took place in the early part of Elizabeth's reign, so that the relation of Cobbett himself, destroys the very fact by which he professes to account for her success in reforming the nation. What is said on the probability of another marriage, will not account

for the neglect of Mary's interest when a widow; so that at an early period, the danger on which Cobbett insists, as reconciling the Catholics to the Reformation was removed, and they were at liberty, without the risk of subjection to France, to study the welfare of their Church. It will presently appear, that they did study this most intently, and that their reconciliation to Elizabeth, was never complete.

Having had occasion in this place to mention MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS, we have referred to so much of her history as belongs to the Reformation. Her painful vicissitudes and ultimate death, form an article of great interest in the history of Elizabeth; but here we finally observe on this subject, that we are far from admiring the character of Elizabeth in this affair, and from defending the severity of the policy she chose to adopt. Every reader, however, of Scotch or English history, knows, that the merits of the fascinating Mary are involved in great uncertainty, and that immoderate compassion for her fate may lead to conclusions as erroneous, as any that follow from a blinded admiration of Elizabeth. We now come to Elizabeth's transactions with France, a topic on which Cobbett is diffuse; and in dwelling on which he loses sight of the English Reformation, for the purpose of lauding the Catholics of France, and calumniating the Protestants of that country. We shall not attempt to follow him through all his misrepresentations on this subject, since this would lead us beyond the design of these sheets; it may, however, be necessary to notice the loss of Calais—and the principles of policy by which Elizabeth was induced to befriend the Reformed abroad. France had been disturbed, by religious contentions before the period of our history, and Philip, as we have seen in a former number, had involved England in a war with that country, which had occasioned the loss of Calais, before Elizabeth came to the throne. Yet this writer most unfairly throws the whole disgrace of this loss on Elizabeth, and even ventures the wild and unfounded assertion, that she occasion-

ed the civil wars in France. With respect to what he calls her base surrender of Calais, we may just observe, that this was the necessity in which the mal-administration of Mary had placed her. Her alternative was the best terms France would allow her—or a war with that power. A war at the commencement of her reign, the issue of which was uncertain, and when the nation required time to recover from the exhaustion to which the preceding reigns had reduced it, would have been a most impolitic step. Philip's *generous* offer, as Cobbett calls it, was unworthy to be entertained for a moment. He had solicited marriage with the Queen, and the manner in which he insisted on the restoration of Calais, was no more than the interested policy of a suitor; for no sooner were his hopes disappointed, and the determination of Elizabeth in favour of the Reformation known, than he very ungenerously concluded a separate treaty with France. Besides which, had his offer been accepted, England was to be bound with him to a war on France for six years! Cobbett charges the Queen with duplicity in this affair, and according to him, she *sold* Calais for a sum of money, because, he says, the treaty was for the restoration of the town in eight years, or, the payment of 500,000 crowns. On this particular we give the version of the French historian, Rapin. “It was agreed that, *notwithstanding, whether the said sum was paid or not paid, the King of France and his successors, should remain under the obligation to restore Calais, and the other places, as they engaged by this treaty.*” * These are the express words of the treaty. * This destroys the foundation of another of Cobbett's calumnies. At a subsequent period, when Havre de Grace, which had been put into her possession, by the Reformed, was taken by the Roman Catholics, another treaty was concluded between the two countries, according to which the original stipulations on both sides were to be preserved, but *Calais was*

* Rapin, b. 17.

never restored. To whom, in this case, does the imputation of “*perfidy*” belong? The conduct of the Queen in befriending the Protestants of France (or Huguenots, as they were called in that country) arose from the necessity of Protestant prosperity abroad, to the preservation of her own safety at home; a necessity created by the implacable enmity of Rome, Spain, and France, against her crown and dignity. The powerful faction, at the head of which the Duke of Guise stood, was determined on the destruction of the reformed; and while it involved France in all the horrors of a civil war, threatened every Protestant power in Europe. Under these circumstances, Elizabeth was prevailed upon to grant the assistance of men and money to the Huguenots. The House of Lorraine were her decided enemies: Mary Queen of Scots was related to them, and countenanced by them in all her pretensions to the crown of England. The policy of the French Court had been to support the Catholic interest in Scotland, and could the Roman Catholic party have maintained their predominance in that country, England would have been attacked from both France and Scotland at the same time.* The policy, therefore, by which Elizabeth maintained the tranquility of her own kingdom, and prevented the wishes of her foreign enemies, was to assist the reformed both in Scotland and France, and also in the Low Countries. Of the political wisdom of this plan there can be no doubt, and its morality is justifiable on the most obvious principles.

In this connection, Cobbett attempts to excuse the *Massacre of St. Bartholomew*—an event, which for the treachery with which it was prepared, and for the barbarity of its authors, is unequalled in the annals of crime. The Protestant leaders had been lulled into a false security, and invited to Paris with

* Father Daniel, a French and Roman Catholic Historian thus writes, “Whatever care she (Elizabeth) had taken to bridle the Catholics of her kingdom, she was always apprehensive of a party forming against her in favour of the Queen of France, who carried herself as heiress of the Crown of England, and had quartered the arms with those of Scotland, whom she was only Queen Dauphiness; and if France and Scotland had remained in tranquility, England was in danger of being attacked from two quarters at once, and disturbed at home by the still numerous adherents of the new religion.”—RAPIN, B. 17.

the most profuse assurances of attachment from their murderers: On the night of the 24th of August, 1572, all persons suspected of the least disposition to Protestantism, were surprized by the most ruffian violence, and massacred with a ferocity which could not have been expected from Frenchmen. The Admiral Coligny was one of the first victims, and all his distinguished friends shared his fate; no rank, age, or sex was spared. The object was the *extirpation* of Protestantism in France. "If I sought," (says the Duke of Sully, the Prime Minister of Henry the Great, and who was himself an eye-witness of many of the deeds of this dreadful night)—"If I sought to augment the horror universally excited by an action so barbarous, as that of the 24th of August, 1572; too well known by the massacre of St. Bartholomew; I should in this place expatiate upon the number, the quality, the virtues, and the talents of those who were inhumanly butchered on this horrible day, as well in Paris as in all the rest of the kingdom. I should mark, at least, some of the reproaches, the ignominious treatment, and the detestable devices of cruelty, which aimed in giving death to inflict a thousand stabs as sensible as death itself, to the unhappy victims"†—The massacre continued for three days in Paris, and the number of Protestants, which Sully computes to have fallen in eight days throughout the kingdom, amounts to 70,000! Cobbett pretends to be indignant that this massacre should be ascribed to the Catholic Religion: He calumniates the Huguenots, charges treason upon men who were confiding in the promises of the Court, brings forward the alleged resentment of the Duke of Guise, and seems to justify this barbarous indulgence of it, and then demands that Catholic principles should never be assigned as its cause. It resulted, however, from the principles of Catholics, and was nothing more than a very consistent, though a very bold illustration of that principle of persecution, which Popes had sanctioned for ages. When we recollect the manner in which Cobbett

† Sully's Memoirs, Vol. I. B. I.

Renounces Cranmer and Elizabeth, and find him the apologist of Mary, and the extenuating historian of the massacre of Paris, we have an evidence of what is worse than partiality, a contempt for principle of any kind, and which warrants us to turn from such a self-styled historian as from one who "loveth and maketh a lie." To his account of the Massacre, he adds what he calls "A Tail Piece," elucidating, he says, the sincerity of the Queen in the disapprobation she expressed of this barbarous transaction. This is nothing more than her deliberation on the offer of marriage by the Duke of Anjou. Now the Duke of Anjou does not appear to have been active in the massacre—the proposal to Elizabeth was made before this event—was renewed by France a considerable time after it—whether or not the Queen seriously indulged in the prospect of marriage is uncertain—but if she did, she sacrificed her inclinations to the wishes and welfare of her people.

But Elizabeth's great crime was her prosecution of Catholics, on which Cobbett insists in language of the greatest exaggeration. Elizabeth (he says) put, in one way or other, more Catholics to death in one year, than Mary in her whole reign. Yea, the horrid massacre of St. Bartholomew was nothing when compared with her butcheries and other cruelties. (Let. 9, § 269) No Protestant writer we hope, in the present day, will maintain that Elizabeth perfectly understood the principle of toleration, or that she was free from the vice of Princes, of wishing to impose her opinions on others. Her extraordinary popularity, arising from the policy by which she preserved her devoted subjects from the rage of domestic and foreign enemies, gave her an opportunity of consulting her prejudices and passions to an extent which must always endanger the interests both of civil and religious liberty. But that many of her measures, in regard both to papists and puritans, indicated an intolerant spirit is to be ascribed, in part, to the temper of the age, of which let Popery bear the blame; in connection with the success with which her political career had been crowned. The popish establishment of Mary had been subverted by her instrumentality, and the Reformation advanced upon principles which condemned all that was intolerant in

her government. Suppose her inconsistent, we take the principles of the Reformation as our inheritance, and pass our censure upon her conduct. Whatever was her spirit, liberty was held sacred by her people; and if in any instance they permitted her to violate it, it was a temporary accommodation to her wishes, or an unavoidable connivance at that power, which she had warily established over them in saving them from destruction. "An attentive observer of this country at that period (writes one of our noble and patriotic senators) can scarcely have failed to remark, that the force of free institutions was suspended, but not destroyed, by the personal influence of Elizabeth; and whilst he acknowledged that no sovereign ever carried the art of reigning further, he would perceive, that the nation had granted her a lease for life of arbitrary power, but had not alienated for ever the inheritance of freedom."* But without contending for the perfection of Elizabeth's character and government, the true history will show the want of foundation for the statements of Cobbett; and which, without an excessive admiration of this Princess, we reject as calumnies. In the first place, the number of Roman Catholics who suffered, has by this writer and others been greatly over-rated. He admits *two hundred and seventy-seven* martyrdoms under Mary; now the total number of those who suffered death under Elizabeth, is calculated by Dodd, (a great authority with Catholic writers) at *one hundred and ninety-nine*. Dr. Milner increases the number to *two hundred and four*.† Thus while Dr. Milner, one of the most zealous and uncompromising Catholic writers of the present day, has not been able, with all his research, to make the number of Elizabeth's victims exceed two hundred and four; and while the number of Mary's martyrs stands admitted at two hundred and seventy-seven; Cobbett, without a single reference, or the least attempt at calculation, has the

* An Essay on the English Government and Constitution, from the reign of Henry VII. to the present time. By LORD JOHN RUSSELL, p. 44.

† Butler's Historical Memoirs of the English, Irish, and Scottish Catholics, &c. Vol. 1. p. 396.

effrontery to say, that the former Princess put more to death in one year, than the latter during her whole reign;—yea, that the Bartholomew Massacre, comprising the murder of *seventy thousand* persons, was nothing in comparison with her persecutions. Language cannot furnish a censure strong enough for such misrepresentations. While the disparity of numbers in favour of Elizabeth is proved, let it also be recollected, that her “whole reign” extended to the term of *forty-four years*, but that Mary’s, sanguinary as it was, did not reach *four*! In computing the amount of Elizabeth’s penalties, the number of confiscations, banishments, and imprisonments is to be added to the total of those who were executed; but from the nature of the case, it is impossible to define this number; and the merits of such proceedings are not to be estimated by numerical statements, but by a careful enquiry into the circumstances in which these things had their origin.

The Queen at the commencement of her reign was far from exhibiting a vindictive spirit towards the Catholics. The penal acts of her first and fifth years were limited in their operation, and their administration characterised by lenity. She had notified her accession to the Court of Rome, when the Pope denounced her as a usurper; and in 1570, Pius V. published his celebrated bull of excommunication; “ever (says Mr. Butler) to be condemned, and ever to be lamented.” This step of the Pontiff was thought to oblige the English Parliament to decided measures in defence of their liberties; and in this we have the origin of those penal enactments for which a Protestant Government has been so unsparingly reproached. Upon this followed the law which constituted it treason, to question the right of the Queen—to describe as a heretic, schismatic, or infidel—and to dispute her power to appoint a successor. In addition to this, another law was enacted, which appointed the severest penalties to those who were convicted of intercourse with the Court of Rome. But still these penal statutes were not rigidly enforced.* Here let us pause for a moment. The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome had

* Butler. Vol. 1. p. 333.

been formally recognised by Mary, and was the grand point of interest between Roman Catholics and the Reformed; the Pope still maintained the supremacy of his claim upon the altar and the throne of England, and in defence of it, solemnly deposed Elizabeth, absolved her subjects from their allegiance, and gave the sanction of his high and venerated authority to insurrections and invasions. This arrogant hostility was to be met. Here arose the perplexing question of expediency. It was not the truth of certain theological propositions—not the authority of certain religious ceremonies which came into dispute; but the independence of England, or in other words, the continuance of Elizabeth on the throne as a Protestant Princess. This was the point to which the Pope and his jesuitical emissaries hurried the Catholics of England; and here it was, that the Government, which commenced with toleration, enacted its penalties. Amidst therefore, the great outcry against the cruelties of Elizabeth towards Roman Catholics, we soberly maintain, that much of what is called persecution, was nothing more than the necessary prosecution of attacks on her authority. It signifies nothing that these attacks were made on religious pretences, they were dangers for which the law in every state must always provide by penalties; and which, even if they originated in fanaticism in religion, must be considered treason in politics. Continental Popery is always dangerous in its influence on the liberties of England. During the reign of Elizabeth, the influence of foreign Papists was of greater consequence than the voluntary and unaided ambition of all her subjects. We have seen that the Pope solemnly deposed her, and summoned her Roman Catholic subjects to rebellion; that the powerful monarchies of France and Spain were ready on the first opportunity to carry the bull into execution; and under these circumstances every one must perceive, that the activity of men in the kingdom, *who had been educated abroad*, called for prompt and decided measures on the part of government. CARDINAL ALLEN, and FATHER PARSONS are well known in the history of this period; the one as the founder, the other as the jesuitical patron of those foreign seminaries, from which

Missionaries were sent to subvert the Reformation; and with it, in inseparable connection, the authority of the Queen at home. The influence of these Missionaries was a new power, brought to bear with a hostile force on the stability of Elizabeth's government, which it became her Ministers to check. The seditious doctrine of papal despotism over Princes had been a part of their education; and solely on the ground of maintaining this in its application to the Queen, were they punished.* The Rev. Joseph Berington, a Catholic Clergyman, when recording the removal of some of the community to foreign universities and monasteries, says, "This secession of IJamont, because had these men remained at home, patient of present evils, and submissive as far as might be to the laws; had they continued the practice of their religion in retirement, and distributed, without clamour, instruction to those that claimed it, the rigour of the legislature would soon have relaxed; no jealousy would have been excited; and no penal statutes, we may now pronounce, would have entailed misfortunes upon them and their successors." Speaking of those seminaries abroad from which the persecuted Missionaries had emigrated, Mr. Berington adds, "It will not be denied, that, from the operation of various causes, our foreign houses soon imbibed an ultramontane spirit, which as it flattered, and by flattering secured the favour of Rome, so did it offend, and by offending draw down upon our heads the vengeance of the British Government. The doctrine of deposing Princes and disposing of their crowns, with other concomitant maxims of a like tendency, were the pabulum on which that ultramontane spirit fed; and we may too easily discover, in reading their works, that the divines of our English seminaries had, with a culpable inattention to circumstances, espoused those dangerous tenets. Their direct application to the Princess on the throne

* See Sir Francis Walsingham's Letter to M. Croy, in Burnet, Vol. 2, B. 3. This celebrated Statesman insists on the distinction, between causes of conscience, strictly so called, and such as grow to be matter of faction. The history of this period shows that it was difficult to preserve the limits of justice in such a distinction; but that it applied to the Roman Catholics, is proved by their own admission, and the undeniable fact, that they divided on this very subject,—some being, in the words of Walsingham, *Papists in conscience and of softness*—and others "*Papists in faction*."

" and to many events of her reign, proved too evidently that
 " they were not tenets of barren speculation, calculated for
 " the exercise of school disputation only ; and if they render-
 " ed the men who maintained them obnoxious to the state,
 " exposing them to prosecution and imprisonment, and some-
 " times even to death, it should not excite our wonder."

Political incendiaries therefore were the venerated victims of Protestant zeal—these form the holy martyrlogy of the Romish Church—and to such influence as theirs; Roman Catholics owe their sufferings. Supported by writers of their own community we maintain, that the prosecutions under Elizabeth arose from nothing vindictive in the principles of the Reformation ; but from a fatal necessity, caused by the intemperate conduct of certain advocates of papal supremacy.

† MEMOIRS OF GREGORIA PANZANI, INT. p. 20, 23, 24.---This is the opinion of a modern Catholic, in support of which we insert his quotation from "Important Considerations," a work drawn up by some secular Priests, viz. 1661. "I know not (says Mr. Berington) who the secular Priests were that published these considerations, anno. 1661 : but their statement shows that, at that time, was the belief of many, and it shows how inconsistent with the truth of things our own ideas have generally been." --Mr. Dodd, vol. 2. p. 379, ascribes the work to William Watson, a Clergyman, who, being an accomplice in the mysterious plot of Sir Walter Raleigh, was executed in 1603.

" We are fully persuaded in our consciences, and as men, besides our learning, who have some experience, that if the Catholics had never sought by indirect means to have vexed her Majesty with their designs against her crown,--if the Pope and King of Spain had never plotted with the Duke of Norfolk,--if the Rebels in the North had never been heard of,--if the Bull of Pius Quintus had never been known,--if the said rebellion had never been justified,--if Gregory XIII. had not renewed the said Excommunication,--if the Jesuits had never come into England,--if Parsons and the rest of the Jesuits, with other our countrymen beyond the seas, had never been agents in those traitorous and bloody designs of Throckmorton, Parry, Williams, Squire, and such like,--if they had not, by their treatises and writings, endeavoured to defame their Sovereign and their own country, labouring to have many of their books translated into divers languages, thereby to show more their own disloyalty,--if Cardinal Allen and Parsons had not published the renovation of the said Bull by Sixtus Quintus,--if thereunto they had not added their scurrilous and unmanly admonition, or rather most prophane libel against her Majesty,--if they had not sought by false persuasions, and ungodly arguments, to have alured the hearts of all Catholics from their allegiance,--if the Pope had never been urged by them to have thrust the King of Spain into that barbarous action against the realm,--if they themselves, with all the rest of that generation, had not laboured greatly with the said King for the conquest and invasion of this land by the Spaniards,--if, in all their proceedings they had not from time to time, deprived, irritated, and provoked both her Majesty and the state with these, and many other such like their most ungodly and unchristian practices, most assuredly the state would have loved us, or at least borne with us : where there is one Catholic there would have been ten : there had been no speeches amongst us of racks and tortures, nor any cause to have used them : FOR NONE WERE EVER VEXED THAT WAY SIMPLY, FOR THAT HE WAS EITHER PRIEST OR CATHOLIC, BUT BECAUSE THEY WERE SUSPECTED TO HAVE HAD THEIR HANDS IN SOME OF THE SAME MOST TRAITEROUS DESIGNS." --Important Considerations, p. 56, 56. Berington, p. 36.

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THE
PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. XII.

SATURDAY, MAY 13.

HAVING taken a review of the reign of Elizabeth, we might close our history of the Protestant Reformation, if the writer before us had not extended his calumnies and distortions beyond his original design, and mingled in his abuse of Protestants, from Elizabeth to the present day, every political event which he chooses to deplore as an evil. Confidence in the security of the cause we have undertaken, together with pleasure in completing the triumph of truth over the last feeble efforts of error, induce us to notice, though briefly, his concluding numbers. In his 12th Let. he writes thus—"But though we have now seen the protestant religion *established*, completely established by the gibbets, the racks, and the ripping knives, I must, before I come to the degrading and impoverishing consequences, of which I have just spoken, and of which I shall produce the most incontestible proofs; I must give an account of the proceedings of the Reformation people after they had established their system. The present number will show us the Reformation producing a second, and that, too (as every generation is wiser than the preceding) with *vast improvements*; the first being only "a godly refer-

mation, while the second we shall find to be a "*thorough* godly" one. The next (or thirteenth) number will introduce to us a third reformation, commonly called the "*glorious*" reformation, or revolution. The 14th number will give us an account of events still greater; namely, the *American* reformation, or revolution, and that of the *French*. All these we shall trace back to the first reformation as clearly as any man can trace the branches of a tree back to its root." (Let. 12. § 350.) For the sake of preserving as distinct a view as possible of these subjects, we shall notice, successively, the following epochs. 1. From the accession of James I. to the abdication of James II.—2. The Revolution of 1688.—3. The American and French Revolutions.

I. FROM THE ACCESSION OF JAMES I. TO THE ABDICATION OF JAMES II.

The reign of James I. becomes important in this history on account of the conspiracy of Nov. 5, 1605. "This reign (Cobbett says) would, as far as my purposes extend, be a complete blank, were it not for that '*gunpowder plot*,' which alone has caused this Stuart to be remembered, and of which, seeing that it has been, and is yet, made a source of great and general delusion, I shall take much more notice than it would otherwise be entitled to." (Let. 12. § 352.) The nature of this conspiracy, to destroy at one blow, the King, the Royal Family, the Lords, and the Commons, shows the inveteracy and energy of hostile feeling, cherished by many of the most respectable Catholics of the age. We are far from wishing, by dwelling upon facts of this description, to inflame the passions of Protestants against their Roman Catholic fellow subjects in the present day; but when we are told that the progress of the reformation is to be traced in cruelty, and for proof of this are referred to the penalties of Elizabeth and James, we are constrained to assert, that the Roman Catholicism of England has, in several striking instances, been vindictive, resentful, and greedy of blood; and that therefore penal enactments became necessary, though the administra-

tion of them may have been chargeable with excessive severity. Cobbett's account of Catesby's plot contains admissions of its vengeful nature and Popish character; but enumerating the provocations which Catholics possessed to this measure, and comparing it with the Cato-street conspiracy of recent date, he attempts to exempt the system of Popery from the blame belonging to it. The comparison we have mentioned is absurd in itself, and the manner in which it is reasoned on, is a sufficient exposure of its absurdity. The plot is no proof of the sanguinary principles of Popery, because, "supposing the conspirators to have had no provocation, those of Cato-street were not Catholics at any rate, nor were those Catholics who qualified Charles I. for a post in the calendar," &c. (Let. 12. §. 354.) The amount of this reasoning effort is, that since the Cato-street conspiracy, and the execution of Charles were not the effect of Catholic principles, the gunpowder plot is no proof of the sanguinary nature of these principles. But if the parties were of different professions nothing is gained to one by a comparison with the other. The Cato-street conspirators were sanguinary men—Catesby and his companions were the same—the principles belonging to the individuals of both parties were sanguinary—but no one believed that such principles belonged to all the advocates of parliamentary reform, while there was too much reason to fear that the dreadful determination of Catesby was possessed in common with multitudes of his party. The case is, Cobbett's principal artifice is to rouse the indignation of his readers against something which he imputes to his opponents, and to take the opportunity which the burst of this honest indignation affords, to evade the discussion of what is equally bad, or infinitely worse on his own side. He never answers an accusation, but forgetting the situation in which he stands, turns accuser himself. He does not defend, but re-accuses—he lets the charge of guilt stand, but puts in a plea for the mitigation of punishment, by contrasts unfairly formed—his is not the bold appeal of the innocent, but the artifice of the convicted culprit. We

have already had occasion to notice his indifference to guilt, however enormous, in the manner in which he treats the martyrdoms of Mary, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew. He always seems perfectly easy, under the most disgraceful imputations; he reminds us of the veteran villain, who, on the discovery of his crimes, is surprized at the outcry which men of the least morality raise against his conduct. While others sicken and revolt at his actions, he has no part in their moral perceptions; conviction is without penitence; though guilty of the charge, he is at a loss to comprehend its disgrace, and, in the reward of justice, complains of his punishment as severe. Thus Cobbett never looks at the flagrantcy of the means, to the use of which Papists have suffered themselves to be impelled, but dwells on the evils of which they complained. His resentment appears to have confounded all moral distinctions, and he entirely forgets that deeds of cruelty can never be justified. Resistance to oppression may be a virtue, but indifference to results, begotten in the madness of revenge, is a crime. On the Gunpowder Plot, we are told, "men will judge differently according to the difference in their notions about passive obedience and non-resistance;" but no difference of opinion, we maintain, on political expedience, can excuse the ferocity of this plot.

When Protestantism was firmly established, its adherents began more closely than at first, to examine the consistency and harmony of their system; and as might naturally be expected, in the forms of a religion which had renounced the arrogant claim of infallibility, many persons asserted its imperfection, and its retention or creation of abuses, at which their consciences revolted. The principle of the Reformation, which recognizing the liberty of conscience, made its final appeal to the volume of inspiration, was applied by them to the exposure of what appeared abuses in their eyes. This occasioned what Cobbett calls "Reformation the second," or "a thorough godly Reformation." His pointless declamation on this head, is scarcely worth a moment's notice: he

affects to run a parallel between the two eras, extending the measures and to persons; and with strange inconsistency and blindness, justifies "Reformation the second," upon the hypothesis that the first is to be allowed. So that having shown this hypothesis to be true, nothing remains in this place, but to pass over his frivolous pages in triumph. If it should be said, that there were puritanical austerities, and republican excesses which grew out of the Reformation, and which the Protestant advocate is ashamed to defend; we reply, that puritanism and republicanism are not, and were not, identical; and that though certain political measures should not be defended by us, the religious character of this period was a vast improvement on the past. Objections drawn from the occurrences of this period, will, it is obvious, appear in different aspects to different persons. There are some who will admit that the puritans were fastidious and intemperate, and that the charge of rebellion belongs to them; they will, therefore, regard these events as the evils or misfortunes of a change from Popery, but at the same time will maintain, that they were abundantly compensated by the essential advantage of the change itself. Besides these, there are many to whom the objections will appear trifling in the extreme; they maintain that the religious discussions and changes of this period, afford a proof of the practical excellence of Protestant principles. Backward to admit the eccentricities which have unfairly been dragged from obscurity into public notice; as evidence of the character of the age, they look upon the puritans as ungratefully calumniated, and consider that they have not yet gained that veneration from posterity, which their intrepid love of liberty, and heroic defence of it, in the season of danger, ought to inspire. Be this as it may, and without party intemperance on either side, we maintain, that at this time, freedom and happiness were endangered; and that they were secured to us by the men whom we are called upon to reprobate. If it was the conflict of Protestantism and Popery, it was equally so of right and oppression, these were insepa-

rably connected with the systems before us, whether as adjuncts, causes, or effects, it matters nothing ; and on this account we admire the language of LORD CHATMAN, in a review of all the excesses of this period—"There was ambition, there was sedition, there was violence ; but no man shall persuade me, that it was not the cause of liberty on one side, and of tyranny on the other."—The reigns of Charles I. and James II., are dismissed by Cobbett very flippantly. We are indeed told of the persecutions which the Catholics had to endure, but with that confusion and incoherency, which this writer knows how to employ, when a distinct view of men and measures, would leave his declamation without support. The first of these princes, let it be recollected, is described by our opponent, as "seeming to wish to go back in church matters towards the Catholic rites and ceremonies ;" and the second, is well known to have been a subtle and bigotted Papist. Under these circumstances, it is nothing remarkable that the opposition between Protestantism and Popery should have been maintained, and maintained by law, since the Roman Catholics aimed at a revolution in the political constitution of the kingdom. The appeal to legal enactments is common to both parties, and though as Protestants we denounce secular authority in matters of religion, we admit that the design of Catholics to possess themselves of this power for the purpose of destroying the religion of other persons, was naturally and justly to be opposed by its exercise against them. Cobbett, as a calumniator of the Protestant reformation, has it not in his power to condemn the principle of secular interference, because it was this which Catholics desired for themselves ; he, therefore, resorts to the artifice of exaggerating its excesses, and all that was injudicious in its course, and of attributing nothing but corrupt motives to its advocates. This stale and exploded artifice is his grand objection to the reformation, and his grand argument for Popery,—he has nothing less and nothing more to produce in the service of the worst of causes,—it is this which blinds him to the incomparable benefits of the one,

and the incomparable mischiefs of the other—and by this means he has neglected all those investigations and reasonings which lead to truth, placing his hope of success in that turmoil of prejudice and passion which always misguides. This artifice is so gross, that we sicken at its repetition, and on account of it, justify our contempt for that miscalled “History” in which it meets us at every turn.

II. THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

James, Duke of York, during the reign of his brother Charles, distinguished himself by a spirit hostile to British liberty. In 1679, therefore, the House of Commons passed the “Bill of Exclusion,” making every attempt for the succession of James, high treason. This bill, however, was lost in the House of Lords, though the danger of the case was generally acknowledged, and the division formed by insisting on restrictions, as a sufficient precaution.* The later acts of Charles were sanguinary and tyrannical, and their odium was principally charged upon the Duke of York; whose subsequent acts as monarch, confirmed the opinions of his enemies. The uniform design of his reign appears to have been absolute independence, or in other words, despotism; the natural and justifiable result of which was, the alienation of the hearts of his people; and after engaging in a series of insincere, intolerant, and tyrannical actions, he found himself alone, hated by his subjects, deserted by his army and navy, his nobles, and even his own family. Under these circumstances, he manifested the weakness of disappointed ambition, and eventually fled to France, leaving the way open for the accession of William and Mary, Protestants, and disposed to respect and preserve the British constitution. If this revolution had not taken place, Popery might once more have been ascendant; and we know not what discredit would be incurred by the Reformation, if it had to bear the whole responsibility of this

* Espin. c. 24, and Fox's History of James II. p. 20.

event. But we look at this revolution, not merely as the ark in which the Protestant religion was preserved, but also as a transfer of the nation from the abuses of power to a constitutional administration. This was, we are persuaded, its chief recommendation to its principal promoters; and however many may now regret it, and others rejoice at it, as the destruction of Roman Catholic projects, religion was a secondary consideration with them. Cobbett's observations on this subject betray the most callous indifference to the great cause of freedom, that any drudge of tyranny could ever utter; and nothing can prove more plainly his unworthiness to be heard in an outcry against corruptions and abuses, than the manner in which he has attempted to degrade the liberties of England. The misrepresentations to which he condescends, risking the contempt of the intelligent, for the sake of imposing on the grossest ignorance, are the most palpable of which we can conceive, and render him unworthy of the age in which he lives. For instance, we are told that the invitation to the Prince of Orange, was made "without any act of parliament;" as if this were an irregularity disgraceful to the friends of the Revolution; when this was a necessity created by the measures of the King, he having dissolved the parliament, and obstinately continued without one, because he could not calculate on its subserviency to his wishes. The manner in which William was invested with regal authority, was marked by the most delicate regard to a nation's privileges, and yet is denounced by Cobbett, as "summary and uncereemonious,"—because there was no act of parliament when the parliament was dissolved—because there was no King to summon a parliament to dethrone himself—or to give his royal assent to a bill of exclusion!—That is, the measures of the Revolution are not to be judged by a regard to the circumstances of the time, but by an application of them to circumstances which could not exist! This is perfectly characteristic of our opponent's mode of arriving at historical justice. But every one must perceive that when a man in the pursuit

of despotism, had involved the laws in confusion; he has forfeited his right to expect an adherence to those forms of law, which depend upon himself.*

When James deserted the kingdom, William might have taken the crown as a conqueror, and constituting himself king, have summoned a parliament in his own name; but he prudently resolved to manifest as much respect as circumstances rendered possible to the forms of English law. The peers requested him to call a convention, for so the parliament convened without the customary formalities was denominated; but William

* Upon the King's departure, there was an INTERREGNUM, but of such a nature, as the like had never been known in England. It was not owing to the death, but to the flight of the Sovereign. So, at the same time, the nation was without a King, and without any one to represent him, and to take care of the government; and yet there was a King, but a fugitive, and who pretended not to renounce his rights. In such circumstances, it is in vain to appeal to laws, customs, or precedents, since the difference between this state, and that which laws and customs suppose, is manifest. As soon as the Lords heard of the King's departure, they believed themselves invested with a power to act in their own names, because indeed, in such a juncture, it could properly belong only to them, to take upon them the government. There was no parliament in being, and consequently no House of Commons to join with them. By the death or desertion of the King, all public offices and employments ceased, because they come from him. There remains, therefore, no authority but in the peers, who are nearest the throne, and consequently, more authorized to take care of the government, till it can be settled by the body of the nation, by means of a parliament. The state of the kingdom was such, that there was no example of the like, to serve for a precedent. The King had abandoned the nation, without being forced to it. He was in full liberty, and there did not appear any other motive of his flight than the fear of being obliged to call a free parliament, which, probably, would not have approved of his late measures, but restored the constitution to its ancient state. The Prince of Orange pretended not to have a right to govern; his pretensions consisted only in procuring a free parliament. But this parliament must be called by some authority. And by what authority could a parliament meet, if the nation continued in anarchy, where no person would have a right to meddle with the government? It was, therefore, the peers who alone were entitled to take care of the state, or else it must be said, that because the King was pleased to desert the nation, without settling the government, the state was to remain in anarchy till he should think fit to resume the care of it. Let the inconveniences arising from the power assumed by the Lords be never so much urged, those which anarchy would have produced, were infinitely greater and more dangerous. (Barnes's B. 24. (Interregnum.)

thought it best to secure the sanction of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of London, together with one hundred and sixty persons, who had been legally elected to former parliaments; and with their advice the arrangements were made for the new parliament, or convention. This was done in the spirit of the British constitution, and marked by such temperance, and a due appeal to the sense of the people, as deprive a Revolution of its horrors, and justify, in relation to it, the offensive appellation of "*glorious*."

Cobbett next proposes to examine the charges against James, but first, "in common justice," as he professes, notices certain things which James *did not do*. As it is not our design to enter at length into the details of the revolution, we shall not attempt to follow him through all his distortions in this place. We only observe, that instead of defending the King, he resorts to his old artifice of detailing grievances under Protestant Princes, a dishonourable evasion of the point in dispute. His conclusion from the whole is, that "this was a revolution *entirely Protestant*, and that it was an event directly proceeding from the Reformation." To which we reply, that he has not shown by a single fact or argument, that the reformation is to be condemned on this account. Never was any thing more pointless, than the latter numbers especially of this history; there is enough in every page to excite the angry passions of the ignorant and credulous, and to make such readers censorious and ill-natured; but to what end they are to sacrifice their tranquillity, they must be at a loss to conceive, and plainly to direct their excited passions against the reformation, so as to give "a method to their madness," they will find impossible.

In this place we have a defamation of men, who have always been venerated by thousands of Englishmen—RUSSELL and SIDNEY. In calumniating the reformation, every thing great and good is to be destroyed: and nothing shows the enormity of the cause Cobbett has undertaken, more than the opposition he maintains to patriots and patriotism in every place:—

"Alas" (he exclaims) how have we been deluded upon this subject! I used to look upon these (Lord William Russell and Algernon Sidney) as two *murdered* men. A compulsion to look into realities, and to discard romance, has taught me the contrary."—"So much for 'the good old cause,' for which Hampden died in the field, and Sydney on the scaffold! What credulous creatures we have been; and who more so than myself?" (Let. 43, § 882, 385). Not to speak of the merits of these individuals as compelling our admiration, we cannot speak of the injustice, illegality, and barbarity of their treatment, in terms corresponding to the intensity of feelings which we ought to cherish. Now to attempt a defence of the men, whose crime with posterity can be nothing more than an ardent attachment to freedom, and whose execution was tyrannical, would imply a degradation of national feeling which we do not believe exists. "When their memory shall cease to be an object of respect and veneration, it requires no spirit of prophecy to foretell that English liberty will be fast approaching to its final consummation."†

Cobbett's next ground of complaint is, "the scheme of borrowing and funding"—"Loans, funds, banks, bankers, bank-notes, and a national debt." We do not intend to engage ourselves in the subtle and angry controversy which these things have occasioned; because, whatever view be taken of their policy and advantage, the reformation, as a change from Popery to Protestantism, is to be valued on other grounds. Its friends may have been injudicious; as economists and politicians they may have erred; they may not have made the best improvement in their power of their circumstances; they may have resorted to measures which we regret and condemn; yea, we will add, they may have embarked in undertakings, connected with the Reformation, which have been the source of great misery; still

† Fox's History of James II. p. 48.

they were right in their opposition to Popery ; and however they have erred, whatever mischief they have done, and though we should bitterly reproach them on many accounts, we value and we will preserve, the Reformation received from their hands. Cobbett attempts to show that considerations purely religious or protestant, led to the speculations which he censures ; the war with France he describes as a " no-papery war ;" and every thing, he affirms, was for the Protestant religion. Now, though we admit that this was the avowal, and the frequent language of the State, we cannot forget that the Protestant religion was with politicians then, a very different thing from what it is now, in any controversy, which we may maintain, on the merits of the Roman Catholic Church. It was independence of France, and the preservation of our laws at home ; so that to cast the blame of certain political measures on a particular system of religious worship, is to forget that civil interests required the same measures ; and that it was for their sake chiefly, that they were adopted. Religion possessed a thousand involutions with the states of Europe, involutions which have shewn the necessity of Protestantism to the preservation of liberty, but which at the same time, have endangered the credit of the religious system we defend, by its alliance with controverted, and perhaps injudicious measures. Besides, when we hear the Reformation reproached for every error in politics since its establishment, we have a right to object to this course as the most wanton and intemperate. Might not many of these errors have been committed, if this event had never taken place ? Would not emergencies have arisen under a Roman Catholic government which might have led to the same steps ? State exigencies we know are constantly occurring, creating a necessity for invention and enterprize, and who will venture to say, that the political expedients of a Roman Catholic government would have been more fortunate than those which have been adopted ? The system of funding, for instance, has no exclusive or immutable connection with protestantism ; this might have been preserved without it, and that

might have been a measure of Papists.* It cannot also escape the notice of the reader that commercial enterprize has been prompted by the measures for which the Reformation is condemned ; and that as commercial enterprize and national prosperity, for a long period go together, we have no semblance of a reason for this sentence of condemnation. This enterprize may at length, have become irregular ; the measures which prompted it may have been impolitically conducted ; and hence we may find ourselves plunged in inconvenience and distress ; but to turn upon the power which originally set a complicated machine in motion, and condemn it for remote and unforeseen consequences, is foolish and unjust.

III. THE AMERICAN AND FRENCH REVOLUTIONS.

The Reformed religion of England exists independent of these events, and which were never defended by any reference to the preservation of the Protestant interest. The one was, what might have been expected, the assertion of independence on the part of a people who had grown too powerful for the control of a distant monarch ; the other was the result of the mal-administration of Roman Catholics, aggravated in its progress by the frenzy of vice and infidelity. Though entirely omitting to show how the Reformation produced the revolt of the Americans, Cobbett endeavours to ex-

* " The favourite reproach which is made to the authors of the Revolution of 1688, is, that they commenced the funding system. As a reproach, however, peculiarly applicable to the government of England of that day, this censure is totally groundless. The system of borrowing and funding had been long before adopted both by Venice and Holland. It is, indeed, a natural step, in the history of a free state, where commerce produces capital, and liberty establishes credit. Even the arbitrary monarchs of Europe have found means to borrow to a large extent. Austria has several times transacted large loans, and has been thus enabled to commit the most flagitious frauds on the creditors of the state. In England, Charles II. borrowed a large sum from the bankers, payable on the receipt of the taxes. When the taxes came in, he closed the door of the Exchequer, and refused to pay. The infamy of this swindling transaction was, in some measure, repaired in the reign of William III. when a large part, at least, of the sum owing was funded as stock in the national debt."—
 LORD RUSSELL ON THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION, &c. p. 217.

tract from their history something in praise of Charles and James; pretending that the colonists owed all their privileges to these princes, while they suffered under Protestant governors. "There was another great thing, too, done in the reign of these *Popish Kings*, namely, the settling of the Provinces (now States) of America."—"All these fine colonies were made by this *Popishly* inclined King, and by his really *Popish* brother."—"They were planted by these *Popish* people."—"From these *Popish Kings* the colonies came." (Let. 13. § 389. 390.) The enterprizes of Englishmen in colonizing America, were first sanctioned by Elizabeth and her successor, and it was in consequence of their charters that settlements were formed. After many fluctuations, occasioned by imperfect legislation, connected with the uncertainty belonging to the infancy of all such attempts, Charles I. treated them in the most arbitrary manner; till alarmed by the spirit rising at home, he granted them those privileges which formed the foundation of their success. Charles II. was deeply indebted to them, but disappointed all their hopes. Instead of valuable charters and patents under him, he confirmed and extended the measures of the Commonwealth, and gave them the *Act of Navigation*, which they execrated as oppressive.* So entirely false is Cobbett's statement that, "It was not until the reign of Charles II. that charters and patents were granted, that property became *real*, and that consequent population and prosperity came." James II. "his really *Popish* brother," when Duke of York, plotted against the Marquis of Halifax, because he contended for the extension of English laws to English Colonies; and when King, recalled the charters by which the liberties of the Colonies were secured, and sent over governors invested with absolute power.†—It is remarked by Mr. Fox, that North American taxation has always been a test of principles,

* Robertson's America. Vol. 4. b. 2.

† Fox's Hist. p. 60. App. p. 7. Memo. c. 71.

friendly or adverse, to arbitrary power at home ;† and as he applies this remark in distinguishing the Whigs and Tories, it may, we believe, without giving offence to either, be considered as marking the progress of principles subversive of the measures of a Popish King. The Americans have abundant reason to detest the profession of Popery. It ought not to be omitted in this place, that the population of the American Colonies, was augmented by certain measures adopted towards the Dissenters, which, in many instances at least, were supported in consequence of Roman Catholic prepossessions. Whatever estimate may be formed of those, who complaining of intolerance at home, emigrated to America, they conferred importance on it as the land of liberty, and have bound their posterity, to the latest period, to an abhorrence of ecclesiastical tyranny? But to leave the exposure of the mis-statements of Cobbett, we observe, that as far as argument is concerned on the bare fact of a revolt, he has failed of his purpose. To pretend to trace such events to the Reformation “ as clearly as any man can trace the branches of a tree back to its root,” has proved in the hands of Cobbett a false and baffled pretension. The process, as he has given it, is somewhat complex ; and nothing can show the absurdity of his attempt more plainly, than a combined view of the events he describes. The Reformation led to the Revolution—the Revolution to a war with France—the war with France to the Funding system—this system to a heavy national debt—the burden of this debt to American taxation—taxation to independence—and lastly *this independence to the French Revolution!*—Not to say how strangely the two last events are connected, without a syllable to show the influence of the one on the other ; the reader must perceive at a glance that in such a progress of affairs, new and opposite principles were called into operation, creating the greatest diversity of character and merits, and often shifting the respon-

sibility of things. This show of argument arises entirely from the succession of events, and in the same manner we might prove now, that every event to take place in future ages will flow from the Reformation ; and with equal justice, that the Reformation with all its evils flowed from Popery, and Popery with all its evils from primitive Christianity ; and so we might be landed on the desolate shores of Scepticism or Atheism. The manner in which Cobbett has reasoned, can only recommend itself to the most credulous of Papists, as gratifying their blind hostility to Protestantism ; or to the heartless and malignant infidel, who, for the gratification of his hostility to the gospel, degrades and sacrifices his reason.

THE
PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. XIII.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11.

COBBETT commences his 16th Letter thus: "This letter is to conclude my task, which task was to make good this assertion, that the event called the Reformation, had *impeverished* and *degraded* the main body of the people of England and Ireland." He afterwards says, "I have made good my charge of beastly lust, hypocrisy, perfidy, plunder, devastation, and bloodshed; the charge of misery, of beggary, of nakedness, and of hunger, remains to be fully established. But, I choose to be better rather than worse than my word; I did not pledge myself to prove any thing as to the *population*, *wealth*, *power*, and *freedom* of the nation; but I will now show not only that the people were better off, better fed and clad, before the Reformation than they have ever been since, but, that the nation was more populous, wealthy, powerful, and free before, than it has ever been since that event."—(Let. 16. § 449, 450, 451.)

POPULATION is the first subject of enquiry. "England (we are told) was more populous in Catholic times than it is now." In the progress of any state, where pestilence and internal wars have not been excessive; where industry has been

prompted by enterprize and commerce ; and where laws have afforded protection to social and domestic rights, numbers naturally increase ; and to remove a strong presumption against the truth of Cobbett's assertion, it is necessary to show, that the Reformation has brought with it hindrances more obvious and insurmountable than the pestilence, the sword, or than either the terrors of despotism or anarchy. With this presumption in our favour, we find it impossible to trace, in the history of the Reformation, the progress of a depopulating power ; or to point out those scenes which a wasted and diminished people will always leave behind them. Not to say, how many cities and towns, the most important in the world, have risen and improved since the Reformation, we ask, what cities or towns have sunk in the vortex ? What memorials of art and industry are remaining to prove, that from the spots on which they stand, hundreds and thousands have perished, without leaving a succession ? But here we are reminded of the size, desertion, and dilapidation of our churches ; and over these Cobbett laments with an association of seriousness, which might lead a stranger to imagine, that they equalled in extent the ruins of Palmyra, Herculæum, and Pompeii. To this we reply, these churches were not built as necessary to the accommodation of great numbers—not so much as a provision for the religion of the people,—as for the atonement of the sins of a wealthy lord, or the gratification of the vanity of a worldly priest. A system of religious discipline was to be established from one end of the kingdom to the other ; wherever, therefore, a priest went, a comparatively spacious, and in many instances, a costly house was erected. Besides, these churches were of different dates, at the periods to which they generally belong, the population of England was a shifting population, for manufactures and commerce had not reached that extent which fixes multitudes for generations in one place. To take, therefore, their size as a rule for the number of persons throughout the kingdom at one time, is a gross misapplication of facts, and

almost certain to lead into error. But it is unnecessary to dwell on considerations of this kind, since, allowing Cobbett his own calculations, they will prove that the present population of England is, at least, double what it was in "Catholic times!" The churches, he says, "were manifestly built *in general*, to hold three, four, five, or ten times the number of their present parishioners"—and that in "England and Wales there are upwards of a thousand Churches, which do not contain *a hundred persons each*;" so that the inference is, our old churches were built to contain three, four, five, or ten hundred persons; and that every parish did furnish three, four, five, or ten hundred persons to every church. Now the number of parishes is about 10,000,* and then taking the average number for each parish at 500, the result is, five millions of the population of Catholic times, when the present population is above eleven millions!

The estimate of England and Wales, given by Chalmers, is described as "a species of deception," and the manner in which Cobbett endeavours to destroy the credit of this writer, is a proof of his own incompetency to determine any question which requires honesty and care. He, first, misquotes Chalmers, for in the copy of his "Estimate" before us, he states the amount of population to be 2,353,203, instead of 2,092,978. Then instead of showing the data of this writer to be incorrect, or that his calculations were erroneous, he assumes a different data, and makes different calculations of his own. By dividing and subdividing he comes to the conclusion, that if Chalmers be correct, there could not have been twelve able bodied men to each parish church; and that therefore Chalmers is not to be credited. Now, though we should at any time prefer Chalmers as an authority to Cobbett, we choose to determine the measure of our faith by examining the authorities or data of each. Cobbett fixes the number of churches, which, as a principle of calculation is always liable to mislead,

* Camden's Britannia, Div. of Brit. Blackstone, vol. 1. Intro. § 4.

and upon this principle he has committed the most egregious blunders, exposing his carelessness in a manner which merits the most unqualified reprobation. He has mis-stated the numbers of Chalmers—the half of 2,092,978, he makes 1,046,486, instead of 1,046,489; and then dividing 483,243 among 14,000 parish churches, he says, that they give not quite 12 to each, when the reader must perceive in a moment that they give above 30 to each! A man, who, filling his page with figures, writes with this incorrectness, must endure the greatest contempt. Now compare this with Chalmers. He appeals to the poll-tax which was imposed by the parliament of the 51st of Edward 3. on every lay person of fourteen years and upwards, mendicants only excepted. There remains an official return of the persons who paid the tax throughout the country, and from this “Subsidy roll,” as it is called, it appears that the number of lay persons paying the tax was 1,367,339; conceding as much as can be fairly required, a *half* of this number is added, as the amount of the lay population not taxed, the Clergy added to this, makes for England 2,080,019, and including Wales in the same manner 2,353,203.* Chalmers calls this “building upon a rock,” and adds, “What a picture of public misrule and private misery, does the foregoing statement display, during an unhappy period of three hundred years!”

Hume’s number of the insurgents under Wat Tyler is next quoted as a “refutation of writers on the ancient population of the country.” But that this rebel should have collected 100,000 men, will not be so surprising as Cobbett pretends, if we recollect the facility with which a turbulent crowd might have been collected in that age—the general and almost universal dissatisfaction existing at that period—and the probability, or rather the certainty that Tyler’s followers had been gathered from distant parts of the country. Besides this, it is

* “An Estimate of the comparative strength of Great Britain, during the present and four preceding reigns,” &c. By George Chalmers, F. R. S. S. A. (1794) p. 14.

probable that the round numbers of historians in this case are exaggerated; especially since in a hastily collected, fluctuating, and rapidly dispersing multitude, there could have been no opportunity of clearly ascertaining its extent.*

Canterbury, which is said to have contained at one period a hundred thousand pilgrims, worshipping at Becket's shrine, could not have been so populous a city as Cobbett pretends. Had it had a large fixed population, it would have been impossible for so many pilgrims to have been accommodated there, as are known to have visited it. In recurring again to the "Subsidy roll," we find that the number of persons taxed in Canterbury, 1377, was only 2,574†: a very inconsiderable number, especially when we recollect the relative importance of this city in former times.

Another attempt is made to prove the former populousness of the country from the state of agriculture; a subject, which will prove on examination, that the country could not formerly have supported such a population as it at present sustains. At the time of the Norman Conquest, agriculture must have been very low. The slavery which prevailed was a strong barrier to its progress. Baronial and manorial rights were perpetually interfering with the interests of the cultivator of the soil‡. The ravages of war must also have been felt in the prevention of culture, and the destruction of produce. This was especially the case under the Conqueror,

* "In 1192, the rebels, says Daniel, (*Hist. of Richard in Kennet*, p. 245) suddenly marched towards London, under Wat Tyler, and Jack Straw, and mustered on Blackheath, *sixty thousand strong, or, as others say, 100,000.*" A similar remark to the above, may be made on most of the large armies, which are said to have been collected at these periods. But there is another remark, which we give in the words of Chalmers. "The facility with which great bodies of men were collected, in those early ages, exhibits for our instruction, a picture of manners, idle and licentious; and shows only for our comfort, that the most numerous classes of mankind, existed in a condition which is not to be envied by those, who, in better times, enjoy either health or ease."---*Estimate*, p. 19.

† Chalmers *Estimate*, p. 17.

‡ *The State of the Poor, or an History of the Labouring Classes in England, from the Conquest to the present period.* By Sir F. M. Eden, Bart. vol. 1, p. 12.---Hallam's *Middle Ages*, vol. 2, p. 459.

who, in punishing one insurrection, depopulated a large tract of country, and left a waste to the extent of sixty miles, between the Humber and the Tees, which continued for many years without house or inhabitant.* The formation of the New Forest in Hampshire, for which multitudes were expelled from their dwellings, and even churches and convents destroyed, will always be remembered as an evidence of the terrors of this "Roman Catholic time." Agriculture did, however, gain a progressive improvement, and in the reign of Edward I. is said to have been a fashionable pursuit; yet then, an average crop on an acre of wheat, was calculated only at ~~twelve~~ bushels. † Added to this, improvidence was a character of the age. The trade of a corn-dealer seems to have been unknown, and the Abbey-granges were the only places in which corn was stored in large quantities. ‡ Farmers sold all soon after harvest, and purchasers bought only for an immediate supply, and the only buyers were the consumers. Hence the price rose enormously before harvest, and the greatest misery prevailed. Stow mentions an instance of this in 1317, when the wheat before harvest was sold at £4. the quarter, but immediately fell to 6s 8d. || In the reign of Henry III. "an assize of bread" was enacted, by which the price of this article was regulated according to the price of corn, varying from one shilling to seven shillings and sixpence a quarter. In this reign also, we learn from the Chronicle of Dunstable, that wheat was sold for a pound a quarter, that is, three pounds of our present money. § In the reign of Edward II. we may learn from a singular fact, the extent to which the manners of the age

* Hume, c. 4.

† Cullum's *Havsted*, quoted in Eden and Hallam.

‡ Eden, vol. 1, p. 15. "In the year 1544, it appears that an acre of good land, in Cambridgeshire, was let at a shilling, or about fifteen pence of our present money. This is ten times cheaper than the usual rent at present; but commodities were not above four times cheaper,—a presumption of the bad husbandry in that age." Hume, c. 35.

§ Eden. *Ibid.* § Hume c. 12.

prevented and impaired the cultivation of the soil. A petition was presented to Parliament, complaining of the devastation of certain lands by barons. The complainant stated that they ravaged 63 manors belonging to him, and estimated his loss at £138,000 of our present money. He enumerated the stock he lost, viz. 28,000 sheep, 1000 oxen and heifers, together with horses, hogs, &c.; from which it appears, that instead of his vast estate being let out to husbandmen, its tillage was neglected, and it only served to support him in a state of barbarian splendour; injurious to the equal diffusion of happiness, and dangerous to the stability of the laws.* In the reign of Henry VIII. when this country had enjoyed all the advantages belonging to "Roman Catholic times," we have a proof of the low state of agriculture, in the readiness with which tillage was exchanged for pasturage. These facts belonging to the improvement of the soil, are sufficient to show that so large a population as now crowds the country, could not have suffered things to remain in the state in which history proves them to have been; and that the kingdom could not formerly have sustained its present inhabitants.

Upon the whole it is evident, that during the periods in which Popery maintained its ascendancy in England, population was considerably less than now; and that it has increased with the progress of those events, which mark the national change from Popery to Protestantism. Lord Chief Justice Hale and Mr. Gregory King, agree in computing the people of England at the arrival of the Normans, at somewhat above two millions. In 1377, it does not appear to have reached a third million, so slow was the prosperity of the nation. In the reign of Elizabeth, 1577, we have the number of 3,860,000, which gives a greater increase than before for the two intervening centuries. But at the Revolution, when the results of the Reformation were becoming more obvious, the population

* Hume, c. 16.

had increased to seven millions; and at the present is near twelve millions.*

"The *Wealth* of the country (Cobbett says), is a question easily decided." But not, we reply, so easily decided in favour of "Roman Catholic times," as he pretends to imagine. In the comparison which he makes between the reign of Henry VIII. and the present, he entirely overlooks the principal considerations, which are necessary to correct conclusions on this subject. Not to notice the comfort and plenty, said to be enjoyed by the poor, we reply to his confident and plausible assertions, that if the annual rental of three millions, constituted the wealth of the nation under Henry VIII, the rental in 1804, did not constitute all our wealth at that time; nor does our rental comprise all the resources, and therefore, does not bring before us all the extent of our opulence at this moment. Our commerce widely spread through both hemispheres, supply us with items which must not be forgotten. Whatever may be said of the present policy of such large establishments as our Army and Navy; whether they are a burden or beneficial,—necessary, or mischievous,—it cannot be denied that they are part of our wealth; and so we might enumerate various national expenditures, which would show us that our property is diffused in a thousand ways; in too many instances, perhaps, without the possibility of an adequate return; but proving our capital, however embarked, to exceed what it was under former dynasties, or in other words, in "Roman Catholic times." What Cobbett says on the revenue as no proof of national prosperity, is another specimen of the flippancy and irrelevancy of which he is guilty, on subjects which he understands far better than he supposes his readers to do. "Every thing shows, that England was then (under Mary) a country abounding in men of real wealth, and that it so abounded precisely because the King's revenue was small; yet this is cited by Hume, and

* Chalmers's Estimate, p. 4, 36, 37.

the rest of the Scotch historians, as a proof of the nation's poverty! Their notion is, that the people are worth what the government can wring out of them; and *not a farthing more*. And this is the doctrine which has been acted upon ever since the Reformation, and which has, at last, brought us into our present wretched condition."—(Let. 18, § 468.)—Instead of admitting that the country abounded with men of wealth because the revenue was small, it is enough to reply to Cobbett, that the revenue was small because the people were poor. To say, that the doctrine of certain writers is that the people are worth what the government can wring out of them, and not a farthing more, is a wilful misrepresentation; since all which is maintained is, that when the government feels the impossibility of making an appeal to the nation, because the nation is incapable of meeting it; this incapacity is a proof of national penury. If the King cannot obtain a revenue sufficient to support his establishment, it is generally because, the nation is *too poor* for such an establishment; if he cannot persevere in a war which he has undertaken without oppressing his subjects, the nation is *too poor* to meet the expences of such a war; and in this manner the revenue will often serve to shew the extent of national wealth; not to say, that though taxes may be multiplied in a most alarming and injurious degree, the annual fund which they really create, shows the comparative richness of our resources. On this account Cobbett's reference to the reign of Mary, is unfortunate; for instead of creditably presuming on the splendour and parade of two thousand equestrians in the train of Cardinal Pole, which is his evidence of the wealth of this period, and in which connection it is, that he says, the country abounded with men of real wealth; because the revenue was small; we remind the reader, that Mary was incapable of discharging her debts—that she exacted money by loans—that she compelled the city of London to supply her with sixty thousand pounds to defray the expences of her husband's reception—that when a subsidy was granted by Parliament, she levied it before the

legal time—and that when engaged in a war with France, which Cobbett has endeavoured to defend, she was obliged to resort to oppression and robbery in victualling her fleet! If she could have obtained large revenues, these evils would have been prevented; and such revenues she could have obtained, if the nation had abounded with Roman Catholic gentlemen of real wealth, as Cobbett affirms was the case.

Cobbett has also insisted on the wealth of the nation in "Roman Catholic times," because a justice was required to possess an annual income of twenty pounds, and a juror of twenty shillings. With regard to a justice, we observe, that the law is not of Henry VIII. as he affirms, but of Henry VI. The most careful enquirers into the relative value of money have decided that a clear income of £100 a year, which the statute 5 Geo. 2. c. 11. requires of every justice, is nearly an equivalent to the original requisition of Henry VI.* Besides, every one must perceive that without making the proportion exactly equal, the law, as it now stands, fulfils the design of all such enactments. Cobbett's account of the jurors and their qualification in property, is singularly confused and inaccurate. He says, that the qualification of a juror at twenty shillings a year, in freehold, or twenty-six shillings and eightpence in copyhold, was fixed by the 1. Rich. III. c. 4. What deference will the reader think is due to him, when he learns that the statute which fixes the qualification at twenty shillings, was of West. 2. 13. Ed. I. c. 38. and that by the 21. Ed. I. St. 2, and 2. Henry V. St. 2. c. 3. it was raised to *forty* shillings. Other acts were passed under Elizabeth and Charles II. and at length by the statute 4 to 5 W. & M. c. 24, £10 was fixed in England, and £6 in Wales, both of freehold lands and copyhold. At last by statute 3. Geo. II, c. 25. £20 was the sum specified for the qualification. The statute 1. Rich. III. c. 4, does not avail to the purpose for which Cobbett quotes it, because in direct contradiction to his assertion, it appears from

* Blackstone, B. I. c. 9.

its enactments, that *copyholders* were not admitted to serve upon juries in any of the King's courts: and this continued to be the case till the statute above quoted, of William and Mary.* Upon the whole, the discrepancy between ancient and modern regulations on this subject, by which the writer before us endeavours to prove the superior wealth of "Roman Catholic times," does not exist. The historical statements which he ventures are erroneous, and utterly subversive of his credit.

The **POWER** and **FREEDOM** of the nation, are the next particulars, in which our Roman Catholic forefathers are said to have surpassed us. The possessions which we once held in France, furnish the argument for the former of these. We are far from regarding their loss as so serious a disaster as Cobbett pretends it was. They were at one time held by the degradation of the English Monarch, and constituted him the vassal of the French. At other times, the tenure of their possession was the blood and money of the nation, for which they were never paying an equivalent. "Power (Cobbett says) is *relative*. You may have more strength than you had, but if your neighbours have gained strength in a greater degree, you are, in effect, weaker than you were"!!! This carries with it the admission of all for which we think it necessary to contend. Power is relative, and our present power relative to our past; it may, in relation to our present exigencies, be weakness,—but, this does not prove the superiority of "Roman Catholic times," for in relation to these, it is admitted to be greater. Cobbett has virtually reduced himself to the absurdity of maintaining that strength is not power! "You may (he says) have more strength than you had, but are in effect weaker than you were"! This attempt at reasoning is an insult to common sense. The nature and extent of **FREEDOM** are misunderstood or misrepresented by this factious writer. "It means (he says) and it means *nothing else, the full and quiet enjoyment of your own*

* Blackstone, B. 3. c. 23.

property.”—“ You may twist the word *freedom* as long as you please ; but, at last, it comes to *quiet enjoyment of your property*, or it comes to nothing.” (Loc. 16, § 455.)—This is more restrictive than the definition of the Roman Civil Lawyers, who made liberty to consist in the power of doing that which is not forbidden by the laws ; and who might very consistently have defended despotism, where the despot had obtained the sanction implied in terms of law. If it mean nothing else but the security of property, a slave may possess freedom, and be a slave still. The foundations of tyranny may be laid, a man may have all the privileges of his birthright cut off, may be prohibited actions, harmless to others and beneficial to himself, and find it impossible to complain of his grievances, and yet be allowed the quiet enjoyment of his property. The freedom of the press, for instance, is something more than the freedom of which Cobbett speaks ; and though these things are in our theory and in reality connected, they are separated by the terms of his definition. He speaks, indeed, of the right to vote for representation in Parliament, and by a series of questions proves its connection with the security of property, and then seems to suppose that he has established the truth of his proposition. But if freedom mean the quiet enjoyment of property, and *nothing else*, it does not mean a right to vote at elections for Parliament,—that is, we may be free without this right— though we are at the same time reproached for the inferiority of our freedom on account of the inequality of our representation. The truth is, he is speaking of what is more the effect of freedom than the blessing itself, and which must be secured to us by the diversified privileges inconsistent with the domination of prince or priest, in “ Roman Catholic times.” Such a freedom as he describes, and “ *nothing else*,” is, in fact, impossible,—it never can be the character of any age, or the inheritance of any people,—and he cannot explain it without contradicting himself, by admitting something else. Besides this, our Roman Catholic forefathers had not so great an enjoyment of this freedom as we possess. They were

obliged to furnish loans, and submit to many arbitrary impositions; and if ever they sought relief from the oppression of their temporal governors, by applying to their spiritual guides, they only made an exchange of oppressors.* The manner in which every man, whether wealthy or indigent, has been taxed, "*pro remedio anime sue*,"—for the benefit of his soul—exhibits greater rapacity than the annals of civil oppression record. Popes, Bishops, the regular and secular Clergy, through all their gradations, vying with each other in the wealth and splendour of their respective foundations, have united in the erection of a system of plunder, more exhausting to nations than any unjust taxation of monarchs: The rich man was never free from extortion. The heir has had reason to tremble, lest the priest by the couch of his dying father, should wrest his inheritance from him, or encumber his patrimony with dues to the Church. The poor man was liable to have his food demanded for the support of some religious mendicant; and no accession of property could be made in any rank, without some additional obligation being enforced to satisfy the newly inflamed avarice of a Monk.† Uncertainty belonged to the enjoyment of property, while the terrors of the Church were employed to pervert it.

The POVERTY of the people, compared with the "comfort and happiness of Roman Catholic times," is not, we imagine,

* "We are told that in consequence of the arguments used by the Church against keeping Brother Christians in bondage, 'temporal men, by little and little, by reason of that terror in their conscience, were glad to manumit all their villeins; but the said Holy Fathers, with the Abbots and Friars, did not in like sort by theirs; for they had also conscience (a conscientious objection) to impoverish and despoil the Church so much, as manumit such as were bound to their Churches, or to the manors which the Church had gotten, and so kept theirs still.' (1.). Indeed, such numbers were in their service, that no less than 2000 villeins belonged to some of the richest abbays." (2.)

"(1.) Sir T. Smith, 230. (2.) Walsingham, 258.---In the 17th. of Richard II., the Commons petitioned the King, for remedy against such religious bodies as caused their villeins to marry free women inheritable, in order to withhold their estates by collusion. Cotton, 255."--(Eden, vol. 1, p. 10.)

† See Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. 2, c. 7.

so great as we are often required to believe. There is a prevalent disposition to depreciate the present. We first attribute superiority to the former reign, and then gradually proceed to concede happiness to our predecessors, in proportion to the remoteness of their date. The "*good old times*," is a proverbial expression; and often the exclamation of exasperated discontent, or profound ignorance. Besides, there is a most convenient ambiguity in the terms, for of what period we intend to speak, when this phrase is on our lips, it is often difficult to ascertain. We are thinking of the obscurity of the past, of whose domestic enjoyments or social comforts we can know little. The causes of that wretchedness of which we complain were then perhaps unknown; and the causes which might have produced wretchedness then, are unknown to us; and our imagination fills up the picture with all the imposing ideas of baronial splendour—rustic hospitality—indolent enjoyment—and we soon conclude that in the absence of modern improvements and modern misfortunes, patriarchal simplicity and happiness abounded. The phrase, "*Roman Catholic times*," of which Cobbett makes frequent use, is obviously convenient for his purpose. Those times, were in reality of great extent, and include a variety of events, some favourable and others unfavourable to national prosperity. Some were marked by the most abject degradation, others were improvements of the past; collecting, though slowly, and amidst many impediments, collecting the materials of our ultimate prosperity. There was a time when the *poor*—a class of men wandering from place to place soliciting the pittance of charity, or supported by a compulsory assessment on others—did not exist. But this was under circumstances which we are far from regretting. When Englishmen were either masters or slaves, the poor, in the sense in which we speak of such now, were not to be found. The master supported his *villain*, and in this state of society prevented the worst forms of hunger and wretchedness, and the curse of mendicancy. This was the happiness of "*Roman Catholic times*!" On this account,

our Catholic forefathers are said to have been 'more remarkable for comfort, food, and shelter, than thousands now; in the same manner as the slaves in the West Indies are said to be superior to many of the British peasantry.* The establishment of manufactures, with the privileges granted them for their encouragement, loosened the bonds of master and vassal, and inviting thousands to seek the support of independence by industry, prepared the way for many painful fluctuations, and much wretchedness, among the unfortunate, vicious, and idle. "The decrease of villeinage (says Sir F. M. Eden), "seems necessarily to have been the era of the origin of the "poor—manufactures and commerce are the true parents of "our national poor."† If this view of the subject be correct; the existence of the poor, as a distinct class of men, was previous to the Reformation, and leaves the merits of this event without suspicion. Here the enquiry arises, how were the poor treated in "Roman Catholic times?" And whatever may be the impolicy and unhappy result of certain measures adopted for their relief at present, we reply, that the laws of their popish masters were degrading and tyrannical, beyond a comparison with any thing of which we can pretend to complain. It was not till 1850, that *free* labourers were noticed by the legislature; and then the principal regulations which took place with regard to them, were intended to *control their wages*;‡ till at length the attempt was made to restrict them in expending their slender earnings. In 1363, several Acts of the latter description were passed, extending even to the apparel of the servants of tradesmen.¶ When paupers increased there were laws for their regulation, which obliged them to work; and which not only inflicted, under certain circumstances, penalties upon them, but also upon those who relieved

* Eden, vol. 1. p. 85.

† See the subject illustrated at large, and with much historical information, by Sir F. M. Eden, vol. 1. b. 1. c. 1.

‡ Eden, vol. 1, p. 68.

¶ Eden, vol. 1, p. 57.

them.* All laws of this description imply a degradation of the majority of Englishmen, at which we now revolt; and this degradation was destroyed by those measures which created a class of *poor men*, as manufactures destroyed slavery, and threw the once portioned vellein on the resources of his own industry. During the latter part, however, of the reign of Popery in England, the nation improved in agriculture, commerce, and freedom; and it was this dawn of improvement which prepared the way for the Reformation. Now amidst all the painful fluctuations of the two last centuries—heavy taxes for the support of the government, and rates for the relief of the poor—can any man be so heartless and infatuated, as to wish for the tyranny and oppression of “Roman Catholic times,” in exchange for the grievances of the present? We have our remedy for persecution and oppression—we do not fear the prison or the branding iron—and if in exchange for these we have the poor laws, they are at least honourable in the humanity of their principle, and beneficiary in many of their operations. Let the man whose political animosities are the fiercest be allowed to magnify, as much as he please, the distress of his own age and country; and we put it to him, seriously and earnestly, would he think of removing it, by bringing back the ecclesiastical tyranny, the princely despotism, the close and iron yoke of the master, together with the ignorance and rudeness of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries? Every rational reply, we are sure, would be, that the Reformation having delivered us from many of the greatest evils, it remains for us to proceed in the developement of its great principles of freedom; and that in short, the road to happiness is FORWARD, and not BACKWARD.

* By the 34 Edw. III. it was enacted, That if any labourer or servant flee to any town, the chief officer shall deliver him up; and if they depart to another county they shall be burnt in the forehead with the letter F.

THE
PROTESTANT VINDICATOR.

NO. XIV.

SATURDAY, JUNE 17.

WE have now completed our exposure of Cobbett's "History of the Reformation;" with what success we leave to the candour of our readers to determine. Before, however, we close this vindication, it will be necessary to review our progress, comprising a brief sketch of the merits of Popery in general. In doing this, we shall not confine ourselves to the facts of the English Reformation, though we rely chiefly for support on what has been adduced in the preceding pages. It is obvious that Popery, on account of the manner in which it has been defended, should be contemplated under two aspects—first, as a political or temporal grievance—secondly, as a religious system, a corruption of the religion of Christ. In one respect its involutions with the forms and institutions of society are numerous and perplexing; affording us sufficient reason to reject it as an outrage on our rights as men, and on our daily enjoyments as citizens. In the other respect, it is to be examined on higher ground, and by rules of the most serious and awful import, and by which we maintain we are compelled to reject it as a perversion of the will of the Al-

delight, injurious to the souls of our fellow-creatures. In one respect we believe the feeling of opposition to it, is extensive and strong; but in the other we fear that it is slightly regarded; while the indifference with which its religious or theological character is treated, has greatly contributed to obscure the simplicity of the Gospel, and to impede the triumph of divine truth over the depravity of the human heart.

In reviewing the history of Popery, we are impressed by the evidence of an extraordinary and unchangeable system.

The force of an objection of this nature depends on two considerations:—in what manner the evil of which we complain enters into the system opposed;—and to what extent the system is capable of exercising its evil power. The system is essentially intolerant and persecuting. We are not speaking of an occasional or incidental corruption of its principles, but of its principles themselves; we are not disposed to attach undue importance to the phrenzied acts of a few individuals; but to appeal to the authority by which these individuals justify their conduct, and by which unquestionably they have often been sanctioned. The pretension to infallibility, and the assumption of a supreme authority to compel a uniformity in religious profession, by punishing those for heresy who dissent from any of its dogmas, give the Roman Catholic Church the power of persecution. Take these essentially intolerant principles away, and it is not only harmless, but it is nothing! The tremendous evil against which we protest, is the vitality of the "Beast," and absolutely necessary to its individuality and identity. The usual way of treating heretics was to "deliver them to the secular powers;" and nothing is more decidedly characteristic of the Church of Rome than the indispensable and imperative obligation placed upon the secular powers to become the ministers of vengeance; fulfill the desires of the Church by deeds of blood. We cannot imagine a more insupportable and alarming state of society than that in which the Church of Rome placed the world, when

every authority in a kingdom, or state, as a magistrate, or judge, were its magistrates, or judges, in every degree, were made to feel that the tenure by which they held their power, was zeal in the destruction of heretics. Monarchs were taught the necessity of the same vigilance, and threatened with the fate of heretics themselves if they departed from it in the least. We have striking instances of this in the 6th Council of Toledo, where the Holy Fathers say, "We the Holy Council, promising to the Lord every pleasing to God, that whosoever hereafter shall be made to the kingdom shall not mean, the throne shall be sworn among other oaths, to permit women to live in his bed, who is not a Catholic: And if, after he has taken the oath of government he shall violate this promise, let him be anathema, maranatha in the sight of the Eternal God, and become fuel of the eternal fire." By the Council of Lateran under Innocent III. it is required of persons in every official capacity to swear "that they will endeavour some day, and with all their might to exterminate from every part of their dominions all heretical subjects, universally, that are ought ed out to them by the Church. So that from this time forward, when any one is promoted to any power spiritual or temporal, he shall be obliged to confirm this. But if any temporal Lord, being required and admonished by the Church, shall neglect to purge his land from this heretical filthiness, he shall be bound in the band of excommunication by the Metropolitan, and by the provincial Bishops. And if he should neglect to seek satisfaction within a year, it should be signified to the Pope, that he might from that time pronounce the subjects rebel, from allegiance to him; and expose his territories to be seized by the Catholics, who expelling heretics shall possess them with out contradiction."

The intimate and extensive alliance between the spiritual and temporal power, has been the means of this singular and

rit of persecution in all directions. The degradation of civil authority to the ministration of priestly vengeance destroyed the security of liberty and life, perverted the designs of government, and established a despotism more insinuating than any other. Hence the history of Christendom presents us with scenes of greater atrocity than Greece or Pagan Rome. The facts which every historian of Europe has put upon record, distinguish the period of Roman Catholicism by the murder of multitudes on the most frivolous pretences, resolvable into nothing but the unfair imputation of heresy. "That barbarous decree of the Council of Lateran, under Pope Innocent III. inserted by Gregory IX. into the decretals, which is the law of their Church, and part of which passes with them for divine law—that barbarous decree, I say, was put in execution in the days of that very Pope; for he employed armies against the *Albigenses*, the predecessors of the Protestants in France, who destroyed above 200,000 in the space of some months. Pope Julius II. is said to have occasioned the slaughter of 200,000 Christians in the space of seven years. *Pertinax* avers (as quoted by Dr. Moor) that in France alone, in that great persecution against the *Abbigenes* and *Waldenses*, there were murdered no less than 1,000,000. From the beginning of the order of the Jesuits to the year 1680, Baldwinus reports, that there were 900,000 of the orthodox Christians murdered, that is, within the space of thirty or forty years. And the *Holy Inquisition*, as *Vergerius* witnesseth, one well acquainted therewith, in less than thirty years space, consumed 150,000, with all manner of cruelty. Insomuch that two very learned and judicious persons, *Mr. Joseph Mede*, and *Dr. Geddes*, speaking of the Popish persecutions; the former gives it as his opinion, that the destruction made upon the Church by the Papists, was equal to the first ten Pagan persecutions. Dr. Geddes goes further, and asserts, "that infinitely more Christian blood has been shed by the Papal empire, and its agents, for not com-

*"plying with the idolatry of its worship, than ever was shed by
"Rome Heathen."**

The reign of Charles V. in Germany—of Louis XIV. in France—and of Mary in England—afford instances of oppression and cruelty, which however excused and extenuated remain an everlasting reproach. We defy the ingenuity of the most subtle Jesuit to clear the Church of Rome from the "damned spot" which the sanguinary events of these reigns have left upon it. If carelessness of the blood and lives of men, a contempt of civil privileges, and the heaviest penalties under the sanction and by the command of the church, constitute oppression; and if any prosecution for difference in religious faith and worship be persecution, then the church of Rome has persecuted most relentlessly and oppressively under these rulers. It is fair to select such enormities as the cruelties inflicted on the Vaudois—the massacre of St. Bartholomew—the revocation of the edict of Nantz—and the murder of the Irish Protestants—and insist on these as illustrations and irrefragable proofs of the spirit of persecution. They were not the acts of a few abandoned and discountenanced fanatics, they are chargeable on Roman Catholic principles. The throne—the cabinet—and the vatican—were the places of their origin; where intolerance was nourished and pampered by the unholy alliance of ministers of state with ministers of religion. Above all, is the *INQUISITION*, triumphing over the dictates of justice and humanity in the principle on which it was founded; awing by its tremendous power of fulfilling its diabolical designs, the most virtuous and the most mighty; and presenting us in its proceedings with a series of horrors, of which it is little to say that they are unexampled in the career of the most barbarous race, and of which to conceive as the actions of our fellow men, is almost too great an effort for the imagination, where Popish bigotry has left a relic

* Dr. Grosevor in the Salter's Hall Lectures, p. 17.

of humanity in the bosom. In referring to this dreadful tribunal, our indignation and abhorrence can never become excessive, and never will the world consent to pardon the Roman Catholic Church for this its disgrace and crime. If capable of such infernal machinations as belonged to this establishment, if free, in the possession of power thus to riot in blood, Popery—the system which the Roman Catholics of former ages transmitted to their descendants—merits the condemnation due to a vindictive and sanguinary system.

The greatest oppression and cruelty of which Roman Catholic princes have been guilty, have been owing, in great part, to their religion. But if we notice the manner in which ecclesiastics themselves have fulfilled the decrees of their Church; we shall have a more pointed illustration of the system. Awfully corrupting must that religion be, which renders its ministers, whose duty it is “in meekness to instruct those who oppose themselves,” furious in the infliction of penalties. Yet in the case before us, the end was death, and pursued with a determination which seemed tenderly afraid of the escape, exculpation, or innocence of the victim. Who could pass the ordeal of a Popish inquisition, when questions, whose purport could not be comprehended, were proposed with the design to entangle in the meshes of sophistry and deceit? “Why articles contrived on purpose with a barbed hook for the conscience?” Then why the most torturing modes of inflicting death? Why make the execution of heretics a holiday—a public triumph—a parade and ostentation of pleasure? Nero performing the musician amidst the conflagration of Rome, has often been surpassed by Roman Catholic ecclesiastics in the delight of cruelty! Why shut out from the sufferer all the alleviations of death, which might have been balm to the wounded heart of the husband, the father, or the brother? Why render it perilous in the extreme to drop a tear or utter a prayer for the sufferer? Hu-

innocency has been proscribed, and brutal indifference to the saddest misery demanded as a virtue.*

Such has been, and is likely long to remain, the diversity of opinion on the most important and sacred subjects, that the establishment which pretends to infallibility, and a right to enforce its dictates by penalties, must prove a source of misery and death to the people amongst whom it exists. Apart from religious considerations, it is a commission of violence on the liberties of mankind, which no obligation to the maintenance of truth, and conviction of the mischiefs of division can ever justify. The obligations of truth, and the duties of justice to our fellow creatures, go hand in hand; we degrade the former when we violate the latter; instead of healing divisions, we perpetuate and extend them; when we cannot prevent the mischief of their existence, we make them the occasion of the greatest mischief to the world; and the pretended advocates of truth become greater enemies to the peace of mankind than the propagators of error. Besides, religious establishments when intolerant and persecuting, are the greatest discredit to religion, and if sanctioned by its dictates, might, as in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, lead multitudes to reject it as an enemy to human happiness. But Christianity we know, not only withholds its sanction from such, but explicitly refused its solicited alliance; and in the place of its sanction, denounces its most terrific curse: "MY KINGDOM (says the Saviour) IS NOT OF THIS WORLD"—"ALL THAT TAKE THE SWORD SHALL PERISH BY THE SWORD."

* When George Wishart was executed in Scotland, Cardinal Beaton ordered it to be proclaimed through St. Andrew's on the morning of the fatal day, THAT NO ONE SHOULD PRAY FOR HIM UNDER SEVEREST ECCLESIASTICAL CENSURES. For a similar order to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London, see Burnet, vol. 3, Int. The delight with which the news of the Bartholomew massacre was received at Rome is well known. The reigning Pontiff granted a Jubilee to all who were engaged in it, and sent Cardinal Ursin to France with a plenary absolution for the perpetrators.

If as a persecuting system, Popery be a national curse, it operates in the way of OPPRESSIVE EXACTIONS, which render it, irrespective of all opposition, a most grievous burden. It is not only dreadful in the terrors of injustice to its enemies, but cruel and oppressive in its impositions on its friends. The population of a Roman Catholic country has always been, and always will be, distinguished by its wretchedness. The enormous wealth of the Romish hierarchy could never have been obtained without a system of taxation the most heavy and relentless. Princes have been compelled to gratify the rapacity of Popes, and have, therefore, become oppressors under sacred obligations. When Monarchs have sought the alliance of the Clergy of their own dominions, in the prosecution of their particular plans of government, they have purchased this alliance by dishonourable and injurious concessions. Numerous and costly have been the undertakings, purely Roman Catholic, in which princes have been called to engage, and for the support of which, their subjects have been taxed in various ways. The frantic crusades to the Holy Land—the less colourable crusades against the ever to be venerated Waldenses and Albigenses—the leagues of princes—exhausting wars and dishonourable treaties, formed by Papal intrigues throughout Europe—are incontrovertible evidence of the oppression of Popery. The Church of Rome is a “kingdom of this world;” the “weapons of its warfare” have been “carnal;” and while its subjects have been scattered through various nations, and its own selfish ambitious politics have been obtruded on every cabinet in Christendom, its political tyranny has been more disastrous than any thing else in the history of its times. It has, in innumerable instances, aggravated “the illness which attends ambition,”—it has pandered to the vices of the most corrupted,—it has nerved the arm, and thrown its belial-gloss over the folly of tyranny—and Europe can recollect scarcely a single evil of any magnitude, of which we cannot say, that it was the worse for this power

"In short," (said the late Dr. Geddes) "I make no hesitation to affirm that the Popish religion has been mediately or immediately, the cause of almost all the political disturbances in Europe since the days of Gregory the Seventh."

That the Church of Rome must have been expensive to its members in general, may be inferred from the number and wealth of its Churches and Monasteries. Add to which, their revenues do not appear to have been always obtained by honourable means, but were often wrung from the guilty by the avarice of Priests practising on their terrified consciences; so that they were formed by gradual encroachments on the property of the laity, and the repentance of a rich sinner left his successors in comparative poverty. At one period, it has been computed, our own Clergy must have enjoyed one half of the soil of England, and in other countries a greater proportion.* Their houses, which multiplied during the reigns of Henry I., Stephen, and Henry II., with astonishing rapidity, were remarkable for their silver and gold ornaments, and for the sumptuous living of their inmates; presenting to our view, on every occasion, the picture of men who revelled in the consciousness of unbounded wealth.† If we add

* Hallam's Middle Ages. vol. 2, p. 4.

† "It is certain that the opulence of the Monks, as well as the number of them, in the times of Henry II. was enormous. And the luxury in which men professing poverty lived, was scandalous and offensive to the common sense of mankind. We have in one of the treatises of Giraldus Cambrensis, a description of the table which was kept by the Monks of Canterbury, and which consisted regularly of sixteen covers, or more, of the most costly dainties. These, he tells us, were dressed with the most exquisite cookery, to provoke the appetite, and please the taste. He also speaks of an excessive abundance of wine, particularly claret; of mulberry wine, of mead, and of other strong liquors, the variety of which was so great in these repasts, that no place could be found for ale; though he informs us, that the best was made in England, and particularly in Kent.

"There is likewise an account in the same author, that the Prior and Monks of St. Swithin, at Winchester, threw themselves prostrate at the feet of King Henry II., and with many tears complained to him; that the Bishop of that Diocese, to whom they were subject as their Abbot, had withdrawn from them three of the usual number of their dishes. Henry enquired of

together tithes, first-fruits, and offerings of various kinds, the revenues of monastic foundations, the amount of commutation for penances, the cost of particular sacred services, and especially masses for the dead; and at the same time recollect the advantages which were possessed and employed over profound ignorance and infantile credulity, we easily perceive that the chief part of the wealth of the nation, and even what was necessary to the comfort of the poor, must have been diverted into the channels of the Church. Whatever therefore, may be said of the political institutions and engagements of Protestant States, since the Reformation, we believe it may be soberly affirmed, that nothing has ever placed such oppressive exactions upon the people as the Church of Rome when in prosperity. It has bowed the proud baron or wealthy landholder into greater submission than his Monarch could obtain; and he has paid more into the treasury of the Church than into the exchequer of his Sovereign. In the cautious disposition of its power, balancing the chances of aggrandizement between the complaints of subjects, and the unpopular efforts of Princes; it has bowed the people to the tyrant, or the tyrant—not to the people—but to itself. It has kept the multitude in all the dependence of poverty and slavery, and made its religious services expensive to every devotee. Its duties were discharged by adding to its wealth. Every consolation for the living was priced, and impiously inventing privileges for the dead, it compelled the survivor to pay for the possession of these privileges by his deceased friend, the best acknowledgment his property could allow. It made

them, how many there still remained; and being informed they had ten, he said, that he himself was contented with three, and imprecated a curse on the Bishop, if he did not reduce them to that number.

"In what manner the laity feasted in those days, John of Salisbury has given us a short description. He says, the houses, on such occasions, were strewed with flowers; and the jovial company drunk wine out of gilded horns, and sung songs when they became inebriated with their liquor."—Lord Lytton's *Henry II.* vol. 3, p. 206, 209.

"merchandize of soul." No generous effort in the cause of religion, no sacrifice of heroism on behalf of mankind; its history is that of an undertaking the most rigidly mercenary, of any which disgrace the annals of cupidity and fraud.*

Intimately connected with the preceding considerations, is the charge against the Roman Catholic Religion, of an INFLUENCE INJURIOUS TO THE POLITICAL LIBERTY OF A NATION. Political liberty consists in the controul of the people over the government, regulating the formation of laws for their benefit, and compelling the due execution of such laws. As the tendency of Popery is to injure this liberty, the history of it in every state of Christendom, records the condemnatory fact. The Romish Clergy have always aimed to make themselves independent, and to create an *imperium in imperio*. They claimed an exemption from all secular justice, as a fundamental and inviolable part of the liberty of the Church. They contended for the sole appointment of the officers of the

* We have an illustration of this, in the modern history of the Church in Spain. The Cortes of 1800, appointed a Committee of Reform in Ecclesiastical discipline. The report of the committee recommended the addition of 200,000 reals to the annual contribution of 200,000 reals paid for the repairs of the Churches of St. Peter and St. John of Lateran, and this only, till the nation should be allowed, by circumstances to think of a further increase of that yearly tribute; and this sum, the Pope was entreated to accept as a compensation of all demands on individual Spaniards, for bulls, dispensations, &c. Cardinal Gonsalvi replied to this, that his Holiness would never submit to the decree of the Cortes. Dr. Villaneuva, a learned dignitary of the Spanish Church, and who was the reporter of the committee, in his correspondence with Cardinal Gonsalvi, shows, that from the year 1537 to 1820, the regular contribution of 350,000 reals had been paid; and observes, that the annual sums paid by individuals, during that period, might be conjectured from the fact, that from 1814 to August, 1820, the payment for bulls exceeded FIVE MILLIONS of reals; and the cost of dispensations for marrying within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, affinity, and spiritual relationship, was more than 420 millions of the same money.

See Practical and Internal Evidence against Catholicism. By the Rev. Joseph Blanco White, M.A. B.D. formerly Preacher to the King of Spain in the Royal Chapel at Seville; now a Clergyman of the Church of England.
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Church, though the welfare of a kingdom, at certain crises, might depend on the character and design of such officers ; and hence the quarrel concerning investitures. From the assumption of their own independence they proceeded to the subjugation of every authority, and the turbulent HILDEBRAND boldly declared, that all civil power should be subject to the ecclesiastical, and that all the crowned heads of the Christian world should hold their kingdoms as fiefs of the Holy See, and govern them at his discretion ! Nothing can exceed the insulting conduct of this execrable Pontiff, when by his legate he laid claim to England as the patrimony of St. Peter, and audaciously required William the Conqueror to take the oath of fealty to him. Suppose the designs, which have been avowed by the Romish hierarchy, to be fulfilled, we should find ourselves under the complete domination of men who would laugh at penalties, and burst through every restriction ; who would allow no appeal to law, and whose despotism would be far more oppressive than any purely secular tyranny. The provisions of Magna Charta, the Trial by Jury, the Habeas Corpus Act, the freedom of speech in the representation of the country, and the liberty of the press ; are all in opposition to the designs of the Romish hierarchy, and can never operate in a purely Roman Catholic state. Every one perceives that the extortion of our ancient privileges prepared the way for the Reformation, and that it was in the contentions of the state with the Popish Clergy, with such men as Dunstan, Anselm, and Becket, that the spirit of British liberty was preserved ; and that had not the measures of these men been resisted, we never could have had a constitution of which to boast, different from that of other nations. The obstacles which were placed in their way, the indignant and noble replies of William I. and Edward III. to the insolent demands of the Popes, the constitutions of Clarendon, and the statutes of præmunire, have contributed to the preservation

of our liberty ; and standing in opposition to the pretensions of the Romish Church, prove that its spirit is inimical to our common and most invaluable rights.* An induction of particulars might easily be made to show, that the progress of liberty and Protestantism have gone hand in hand. Were not the peasants of Germany oppressed beyond endurance, when they rose in violent opposition to Papal power ? Was not the policy of Charles V., when he determined to support the Popedom, injurious to the peace and prosperity of his extensive dominions ? Have not the uninterrupted succession of Roman Catholic Princes, and the almost undisputed power of the priesthood in Spain—the land of the Inquisition—kept it in the back-ground of continental improvement ? Have not the most bigotted adherents to Rome in France, the House of Lorrain for instance, been its most cruel oppressors ? And finally, would America at the present moment occupy its proud station in the eyes of the “ old world,” if the Roman Catholic Church were permitted to issue its mandates as it wishes ? Does not, in short, the humiliated situation in which this Church is found, mark the advancement of those nations in liberty, where it once reigned in terror ; and should we not deprecate the establishment of its claims in the Western hemisphere, as the extinction of those hopes, which the experiment of liberty—at once on a bold principle and a large scale—has there awakened ?

Papal Rome has been **THE ENEMY OF MENTAL IMPROVEMENT**. Though at one period its clergy possessed almost all the learning of Europe, the disenthralment of the mind from the dominion of ignorance is a work, of which it may not only be said, that its honour does not belong to them, but which has been accomplished in opposition to their wishes and their measures. Their Schools and Colleges were neither calcu-

* P. 54, &c.

lated nor designed to promote the education of the people; they were confined to the selfish purpose of their own order, and that purpose inconsistent with liberal pursuits of their own; "music, for instance, being reduced to church chanting, and astronomy to the calculation of Easter." Though individuals of the Romish community have been found, whose names stand high in the history of literature, they are not so numerous as might be expected, their efforts for the removal of popular ignorance were not so great as they ought to have been, and in every degree they found the greatest difficulty and danger in reconciling their ardour in learning and science with the duties of their religious profession. The hostility of the Church of Rome to every thing which enlightens and expands the public mind, is most distinctly to be traced in the treatment of many productions of genius, and of some most adventurous and useful men. The councils of Lateran and Trent assumed a censorship, which was an effectual threat to all who desired an improvement in the philosophical or theological jargon of the schools. The fate of GALILEO, condemned to the prisons of the Inquisition for asserting the motion of the earth, is a fact which ought never to be forgotten; especially when we learn, that the condemnation of his theory, first passed in the seventeenth century, was renewed and republished in 1819! It is a singular but instructive circumstance, that when two Popish Mathematicians, *Le Seur* and *Jacquier*, published *Newton's Principia*, they shunned the perilous responsibility of maintaining the truth of his theory. "Newton (they say) assumes the hypothesis of the earth's motion. But we declare our submission to the decrees of the Roman Pontiffs against the motion of the earth." This was in 1742. "Science (says Mr. White) has scarcely ever made a step without bowing with a lie in her mouth to Roman infallibility." How much our own intellectual improvement owes to our exemption from Papal jurisdiction and Roman Catholic censorship, is evident from the fact, that in the *index librorum pro-*

hibitorum, printed at Rome by authority in 1819, we find among other English writers, *Bacon De Augmentis scientiarum*—*Locke on the Human Understanding*—and *Cudworth's Intellectual System*.* All this is perfectly natural, consistent, and necessary. The infallibility of the Church of Rome, and discoveries, even in science, are incompatible. The boundless enquiries on which the human mind, when roused from slumber, will enter, must place many of its dogmas in doubt, and produce indignation against its authority. To enquire for ourselves is ultimately to decide for ourselves, and independence once enjoyed, we cannot be consistent Papists any longer.

The Papal hierarchy has been applauded for the policy of its principles, and the efficiency of the means it has called into operation. Many contemplate it as a striking monument of human sagacity, though perverted to the promotion of the worst designs. The intrigues of Cabinets, and the subtlety of Princes, have been surpassed by its exercise of these imposing qualities; till at length it appears unrivalled, compelling the admiration of those whom it alarms. But there is a radical fallacy belonging to it, unavoidable perhaps, yet certain to procure it everlasting contempt. If it has been all that infernal ingenuity can invent, there is a power to be met, against which infernal ingenuity can make no provision; and at the period when its proud conquests are impeded, and it is thrown on its own resources in self-defence, its essential imperfection is seen. It found the world ignorant, and adapting itself to this ignorance, prospered for a time; but this state of the world was not immutable, it was impossible that it should long continue, and in the changes which in this respect are rapidly gathering around us, its policy is exhausted and its power destroyed. The Jesuits have indeed endeavoured to

* See Practical and Internal Evidence, &c. Let 1.

engross the public mind, and when education became necessary sought, to make the work all their own; but seeking the aggrandizement of their order under all circumstances, and at any risk, they drew upon them the indignation of many of the best friends of their Church. Between that knowledge which makes men feel their independence and teaches them the duty of maintaining it, and the authority of the Romish Church, an essential opposition subsists; which nothing can quell, and that must terminate in the destruction of the latter. Though this opposition was little seen for ages, and its importance has been seldom adequately estimated; it is now exhibited to the world—evasion is impossible—the lists are entered—the combatants have closed upon each other—and no extraordinary sagacity is required to predict the issue.





